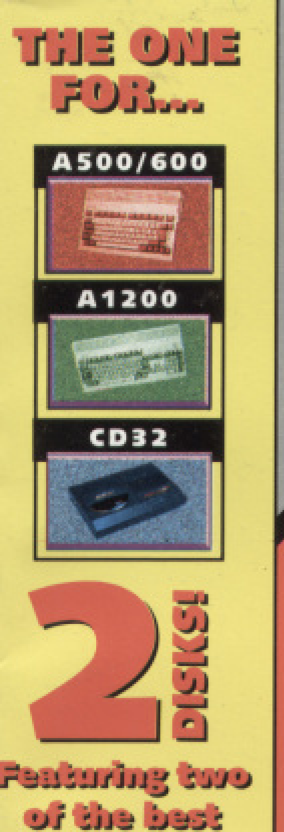
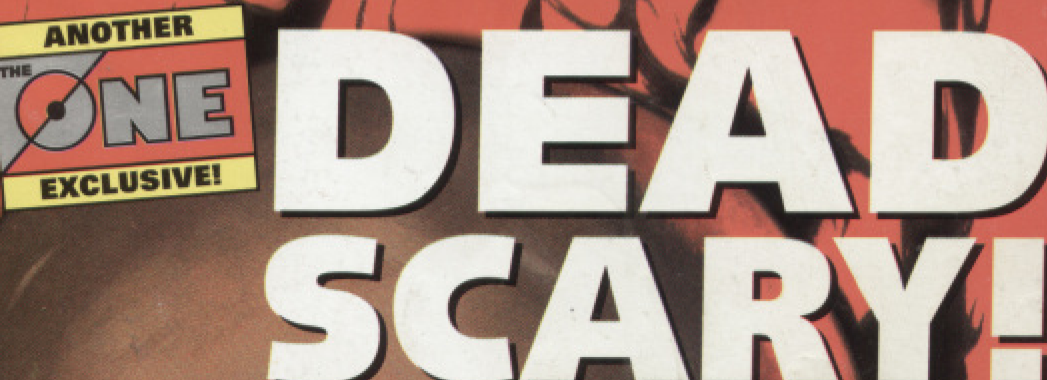




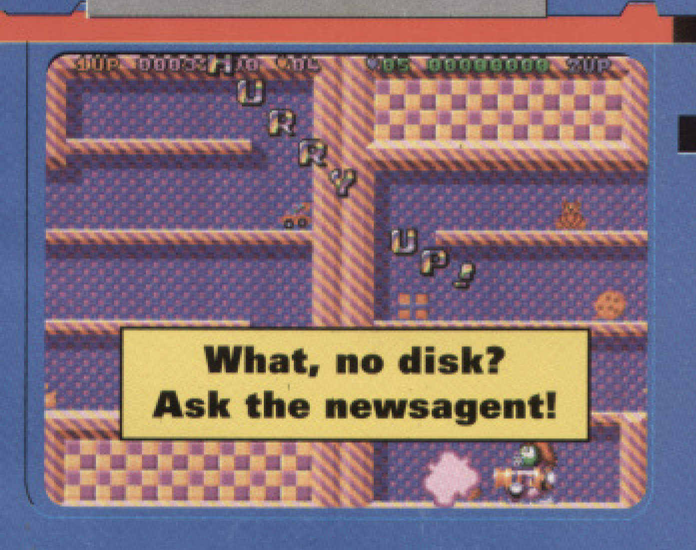


ANOTHER THE ONE EXCLUSIVE!

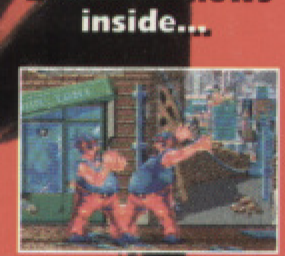


DEAD SCARY!

Pap your pants as Core Design unveil the SKELETON KREW! It's the slickest, shootiest and spookiest blast-'em-up the Amiga has ever seen!







REBEL ASSAULT ON CD32? Exclusive news inside...

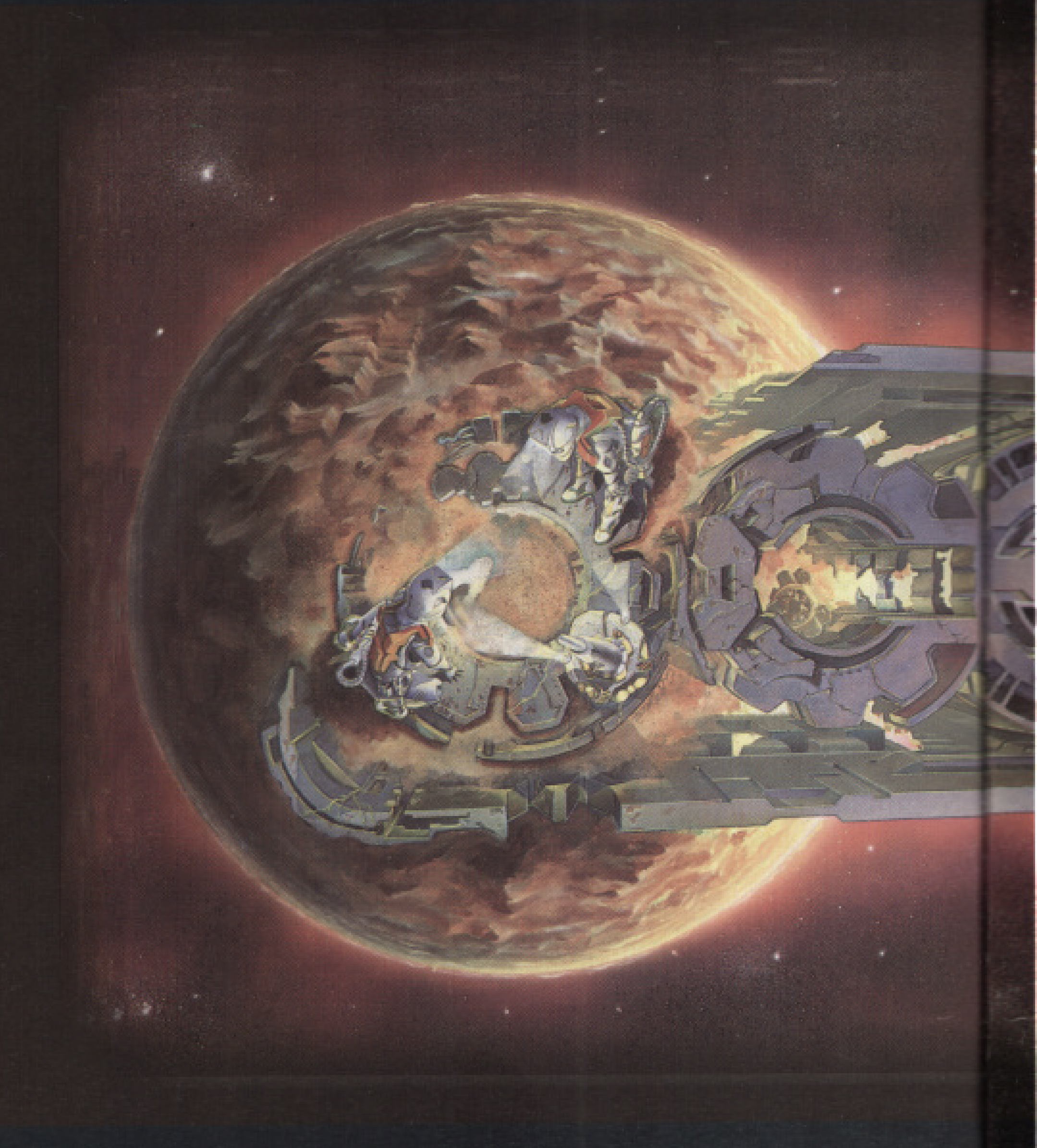
DANGEROUS STREETS Can CD32 games get any worse?

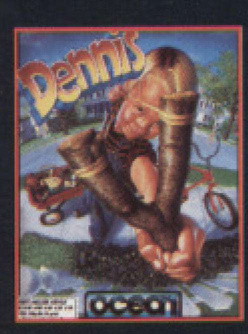
REVIEWED! Cool Spot, Simon The Sorcerer, Pirates! Gold, F1, Brian The Lion, The Labyrinth Of Time and many more!

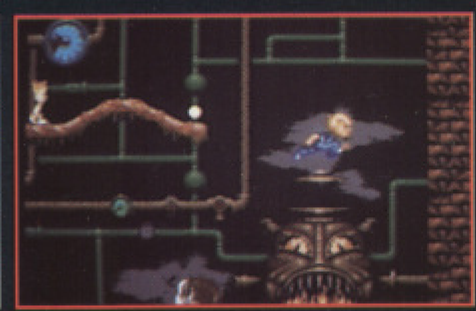
PREVIEWED! Heimdall 2, Magician's Castle and Out To Lunch, as well as Binary Asylum's super-secret Zeewolf!

TIPPED! Star Trek, Simon The Sorcerer and Wiz 'n' Liz, plus Mortal Kombat's finishing moves revealed!

Discover a who



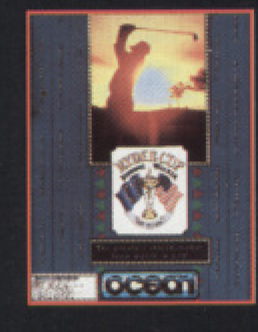




Now you can play the sling-shot hero and join in on all his side splitting pranks.

Dennis is his name and mischief is his game as he drives Mr. Wilson out of his mind! Wreak havoc, double the trouble or just mess things up a little, whichever... it's fun all the way!

AMIGA 1200 . AMIGA CD32 . AMIGA 500/600

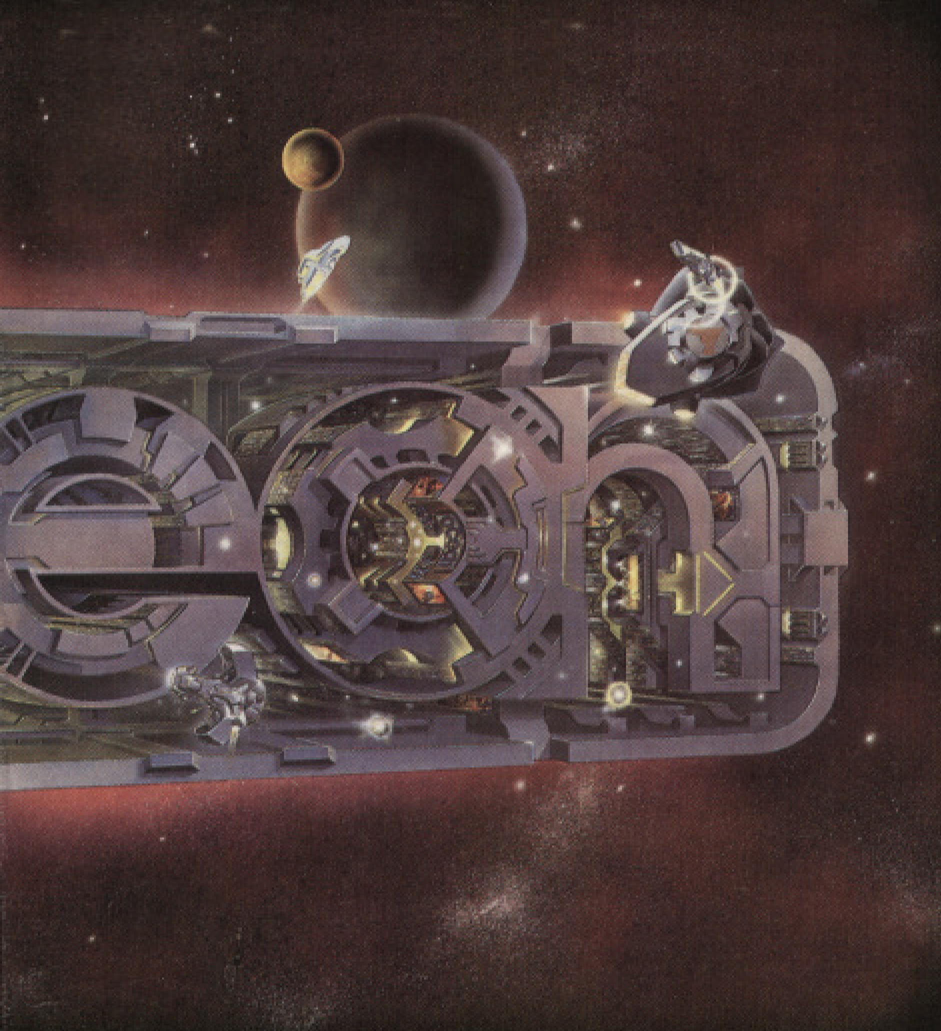




Now you can compete in the Ryder Cup - one of sport,s greatest events. Every detail of the game has been intricatetly simulated to put you right there on the course. You must get every detail spot-on if you want to keep up with your high calibre opponents.

IBM PC & COMPATIBLES . AMIGA 1200 . AMIGA CD32 . AMIGA 500/600

ble NEW world









TFX... the only choice worth making where the leading edge of aerial combat is concerned.

"The graphic detail is quite superb... TFX is quite often like watching a movie..." PC REVIEW

"D.I.D. have emulated a multi-million dollar flight sim." THE EDGE

IBM PC & COMPATIBLES . AMIGA 1200 . AMIGA CD32 . CD ROM

GRAB YOUR NUTZ!

This well bad rodent has got things to prove... like:

"I can flatten a hedgehog with just a swish of the tail"... or "Just throw me a nut and I'll make Billy the Kid look like a low rent circus side-show!"

He's a cracker, so don't you miss Mr. NUTZ!

AMIGA 500 . AMIGA 600



conte

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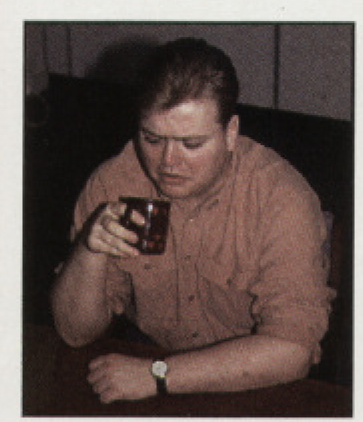
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The One is produced with Apple Macintosh Desktop Publishing, using QuarkXpress, Adobe Illustrator, Theatrics, Adobe Photoshop and a host of others. Film output by Team, 105-109 Oxford Street, London W1, and PrePress, 124-132 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1R. Printed by Passmore International.

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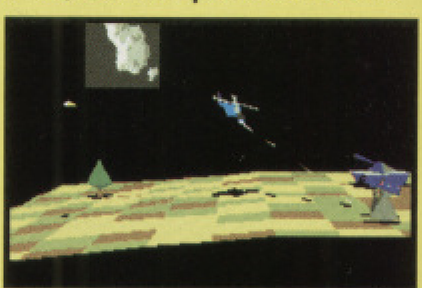
Now look, we're getting a little fed up with people sending in faulty coverdisks directly to us. Please, please, please send them to; The One Coverdisk Returns, PC Wise, Dowlais Top Business Park, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan CF48 2YY. We regret that any coverdisk problems sent to us will remain unanswered.



It's customary at this time of year to wish one's fellow humanoids a 'Happy New Year'. I, however, don't really feel the need to do that. You see, once you've scanned through this bulging issue of The One you'll already know that it's going to a very happy New Year for Amiga gamers without me having to tell you. For a start there are new games on the horizon like Core's excellent Skeleton Krew and Binary Asylum's Zeewolf, and out and about at the moment are top titles like Simon The Sorcerer and Cool Spot. So, enjoy the issue. I'm off now to mop up the last scraps of the Xmas turkey.

David Upchurch,
Editor.





nts

REBEL ASSAULT ON CD32?

Turn to page 10...

WIN! AN A1200

See page 42...

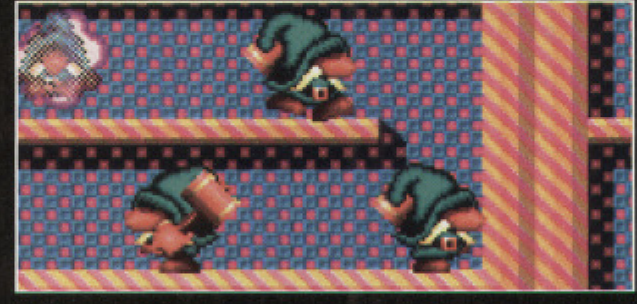
GAMES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

SIMON THE SORCEROR....76
AdventureSoft lands quite literally out of the blue with a super-dooper little lad under their arm. Let's just say that he's a sorceror, and his name is Simon. I think you dig where I'm coming from, my man. Four pages this way.



ON THE DISKS...
Simply skip over the page to find out how you can get going with your fantastic demos of Beneath A Steel Sky and Super Methan Bros! Exciting, eh?







BOOT SECTOR

LOADING YOUR DISKS

1. Take the disk of your choice and insert it into your humble Amiga's disk drive, all the while on the look out for any free food.
2. Turn on your Amiga and see if any sausages fall out the back.
3. Just in case any fried slices are lodged inside, pick the game of your choice with the mouse or function keys.
4. Pig out on quality games.

BENEATH A STEEL SKY
Virgin Interactive

Young Mr Simon Byron broke the mould back in November by actually enjoying himself at work. The reason? Beneath A Steel Sky from Virgin. So, with this in mind (not forgetting the incredible 93% that the game was awarded) we've managed to get a fully playable chunk of the aforementioned darling for you, the reader (who we love incidentally), to sample.

In case you missed Simon's gargantuan review, let me explain that you play the part of Foster, a rebel living in a barren area called the Gap, who's been abducted and subsequently dumped in the middle of a bitter and twisted society. (I made that last bit up actually, but that's what I reckon from looking at the screen shots.)

So, with a quick load of the demo, you must now take Foster through the point-'n'-click world of Beneath A Steel Sky, making use of objects that you find along the way, to solve puzzles that you, er... find along the way.

You start with no possessions other than the master circuit board for your faithful robot companion Joey, and your bare hands. I won't say too much, but let's just say that the circuit board will fit into pretty much any sort of mechanical contraption, so you shouldn't be on your own for too long.

Once you start collecting objects, you can manipulate your inventory by raising the mouse to the top of the screen, at which point a bar will drop down, allowing you to examine and use the item of your choice. Other than that, it's all fairly instinctive as far as point 'n' clicks go, but here's a little guide none-the-less.



What's our present LOCATION?
Any HUMAN activity nearby?
That little shell SUITS you, Joey.
What TOOLS does that shell have?
Forget it...

LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT IT

You can call up a description of any animal, vegetable or mineral held or in the game area with a click on the LEFT MOUSE BUTTON. The cursor is 'intelligent' and will let you know of any particular items of interest that it happens to be over, as well as people in that area and ways out of the screen you're on. The LMB is also use for general day-to-day walking around the place.

CAN I STROKE IT?

To take, talk to or use any of the things you find in the demo, simply click over it with the RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON. If you want to use an item from your inventory, move the cursor to the top of the screen (thus pulling down the inventory bar) and click over the item you want with the right mouse button. The cursor will now change to a hand icon, which can be moved over the area you want to use it on and activated with another click on the RHMB. Hubba-hubba, super-dooper - you should be there!

Okay, that's it as far as it goes. Good luck and have fun - which shouldn't be too difficult.

Well, here we are again my friends. Same old moon, same old jungle, same old two disks brimming with the closest thing to bliss this side of Amsterdam. Yup, we've done it again - two gorgeous blue squares just waiting for your undivided attention. Matt Broughton talks you through them.



DISK A
BENEATH A STEEL SKY



DISK B
SUPER METHANE BROS.
(A500/600 and A1200 versions)

SUPER METHANE BROTHERS

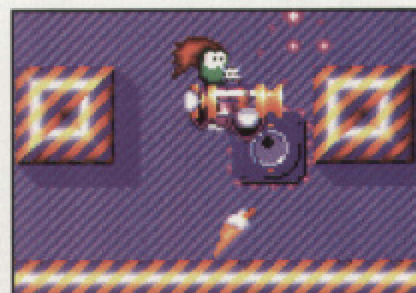
Apache Software

I'd like to introduce you to a new name in Amiga gaming - Apache Software. Though the company has only been in existence since April 1993, they already have a healthy looking list of Amiga projects in development (and have just completed the CD32 version of Sensible Soccer for Renegade), and we're fortunate enough to be in a position to let you sample five full levels - YES! THAT'S RIGHT - FIVE FULL LEVELS - from their forthcoming release, Super Methane Brothers.



So, having recovered from the initial shock of this incredible offer, you'll no doubt be wondering what it's all about. Well, are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin...

Puff and Blow are two young heroic adventurers from the kingdom of Chronos who, while wandering aimlessly one day, come across an old wooden door that takes them into a massive clock tower. As they enter, the door slams shut behind them and they hear the echoes of evil laughter. Puff and Blow start to panic, when an old Timekeeper appears and says "Borrow these methane guns and these magical gas masks to defend yourself from the evil snake who controls the fortress and his minions. You'll need to collect four pieces of the Golden Key Of Doom to enable you to escape." Hmm. Yes.



Well, games like this have never worried too much about cunning storylines, so why let it bother now? All you really need to know is that you must use your methane gun to trap all the weird baddies on each level inside gas clouds and then suck them back into the gun. Once you have the bad guy trapped, you can kill him by shooting him back out against a wall or block.

Dead nasties will, as is expected from any platform game of the late twentieth century, explode in a shower of goodies that should all be collected for a bonus and point frenzy. Some special pick-ups will appear, which when collected will bestow the player with anything from turbo speed to reversed controls. Should you manage to clear the entire level without losing a life, you'll also be rewarded with a huge playing card which, needless to say, should be collected as soon as possible to avoid disappointment!

You can jump up through platforms, but so can the bad guys (some of them can drop through as well, so watch out) and one touch is all that's needed to lose a life, but other than that - it's all simple stuff.

Check out Simon's WIP on page 39 for the full story on Apache and Super Methane Brothers as I'm sure it will be quite well written. Possibly.

Press to release gas. Press and hold to suck in gassed baddy. Release to throw trapped baddie.

Jump

Run left

Run right

N/A

NOTE TO ALL AMIGA USERS!

Once loaded, Super Methane Brothers will offer you the choice of playing the standard or A1200 version of the game. Needless to say, make sure you pick the correct one for hours of platform japes. Have fun!

DAMN AND BLAST!

Due to the large number of duplicate disks made, the odd disk isn't quite all there. We're very sorry if you've got one of these but don't despair, help is at hand. Whatever you do DON'T SEND THEM TO US! Instead, send them off to this address with a SAE for 28p:

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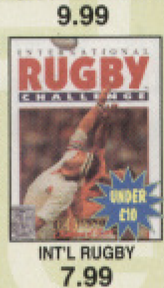
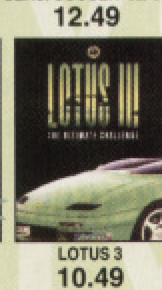
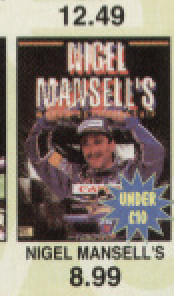
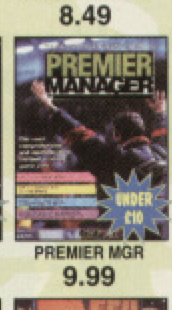
Once you've done this you can sit back and wait for your replacement disk to arrive. If you think that you can solve your problems down the dog and bone, call the PC Wise helpline on (0685) 350505 between 10:30am and 12:30pm on weekdays.

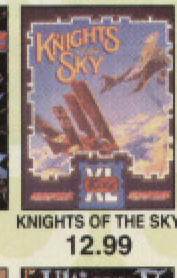
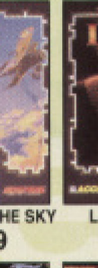
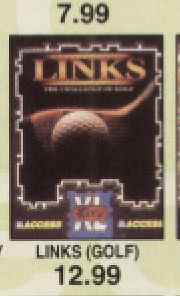
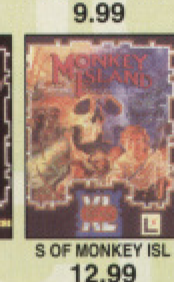
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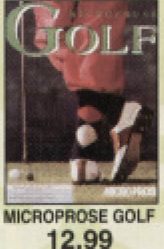
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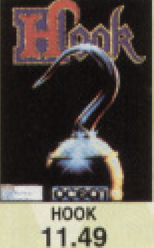






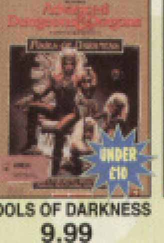
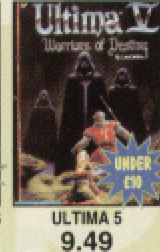






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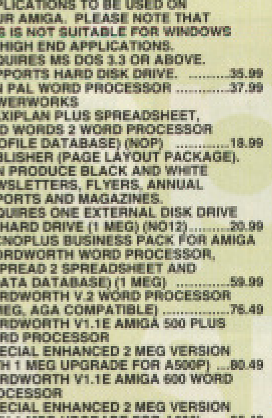
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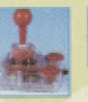
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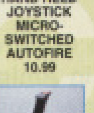
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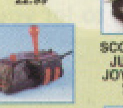
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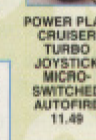
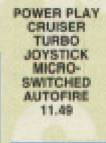

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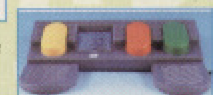
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NEWS

REBEL ASSAULT ON CD32?

The growing catalogue of CD32 software could soon be boosted by the addition of two 'instant classics' from the LucasArts team, if a top secret deal between Commodore's UK team and George Lucas' very own software company is agreed.

Although details of the deal remain unconfirmed, sources from within Commodore have confirmed to The One that it is close to securing the rights to produce Rebel Assault and Day of the Tentacle, LucasArts' two biggest names of 1993, which have up until now been exclusively available to PC gamers.

Developed by the same LucasArts team which brought those smug gits who own PCs that other space combat classic, X-Wing, Rebel Assault doesn't quite match up to that effort in the terms of flight sim accuracy (in so much as you can be accurate about a space fighter which only exists in the filmmakers' collective imaginations). However, it does stand head and shoulders above all of the competition in being the first truly successful attempt at producing an 'interactive movie' for a home computer system.



In similar style to Wing Commander and other Origin efforts, Rebel Assault combines arcade-style action with plenty of male-bonding interaction with other characters - but thanks to the clever use of CD storage, it achieves its aims more successfully than any of its predecessors.

As befitting a 'movie' Rebel Assault is developed in narrative style, with the player starting life as a rookie pilot on the Tatooine training course, and goes on to take in tours of duty on the ice planet Hoth and eventually the rebel HQ on Yavin.

Easily the most successful PC CD action game yet, Rebel Assault is ideal for conversion to the CD32 - and, if the 32-bit processor is used to its fullest capabilities, it could even be the best version yet.



Day of the Tentacle may not make quite the same technical demands on the CD console, but it too could turn out to be an instant classic if Commodore's plans come to fruition. An animated adventure in the 'Monkey Island' mould, DOTT (cute, eh?) is actually a sequel to an ancient Lucasfilm offering, Maniac Mansion.

The plot is almost too bizarre to go into in detail but suffice to say that it once again involves the three heroes of Maniac Mansion (that's Bernard, Laverne and Hoagie, for those of you who don't remember) saving the world from a mess which is, admittedly, of their own making. The ensuing chaos involves plenty of time travel, farcical plot twists, puzzle-solving and, most importantly, humour.

As any game designer will tell you, humour is by far the most difficult element to inject into a computer game, but the LucasArts team have definitely managed it this time around - DOTT will keep its player amused and baffled in equal measures from start to finish.

However, while it is believed that negotiations between Commodore and LucasArts are quite advanced at this point, it could still be some time before either game reaches your shop, as conversion work would have to be carried out from scratch (it's likely that this would take place on this side of the Atlantic, to take advantage of the European's Amiga expertise). But if the deal comes off it wouldn't be too much to expect both games to make it to the CD32 before the end of this year.





VIRGIN SPONSORS MORE GOALS!

England may have failed to reach this year's World Cup finals, but their chances of reaching the next lot may have improved ever so slightly now that Virgin Interactive has decided to get involved with the nation's favourite sport. Following its link-up with Adidas for the release of Dino Dini's Goal!, Virgin has decided to join in with the sports equipment giant in sponsoring a new initiative to promote footballing skills among younger players.

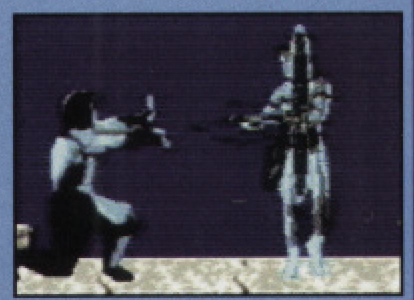
The new project, entitled the 'Virgin Games Schools Football Initiative', will promote the use of the 'Coerver' method of football coaching in around 25,000 British schools. Originally developed in Holland, the Coerver method is based around a 'one player, one ball' philosophy and is designed to promote individual skill.

Bearing this in mind, Virgin strangely launched the scheme at Highbury, home of some of the UK's dullest football. Under the watchful eye of George Graham, a Virgin representative handed over a cheque for £47,000 to the scheme's co-ordinator, Phil Darren. This money will be matched pound for pound by the Government.

Commenting on the scheme, Virgin's marketing manager Paul Dowling says: "The Coerver sponsorship deal could not have come at a more opportune time, following England failing to qualify for the World Cup. Not only does this scheme encourage kids to learn individual football skills, but it will also give Virgin Interactive Entertainment direct access to around 25,000 UK schools."

Whatever could he mean?





CHRISTMAS NUMBER ONE

Christmas may come and Christmas may go, but the Amiga bandwagon just keeps rolling along, as game sales at the peak period of 1993 have once again demonstrated.

Despite increasing competition (mostly from the PC), the Amiga remained the most popular games computer of last Christmas, accounting for 57.5 per cent of all software sold.

The biggest-selling games over the period included Jurassic Park, Mortal Kombat, Elite 2 and Cannon Fodder, while the most successful single publisher was Virgin, which cornered over 15 per cent of the market.

GOINGS-ON AT COMMODORE

It's been a funny old month for the chaps at Commodore - in the space of only four weeks they managed to have a pop at Sega, launch the full-motion video add-on for the CD32 player and even see their latest machine end up in a museum!

The most important news, of course, is the launch of the full-motion video (FMV) cartridge, which finally went on sale in limited quantities just after Christmas. The cartridge, which allows the CD-based games machine to play up to 74 minutes of video footage from a single disc, is available now priced at £199.99.

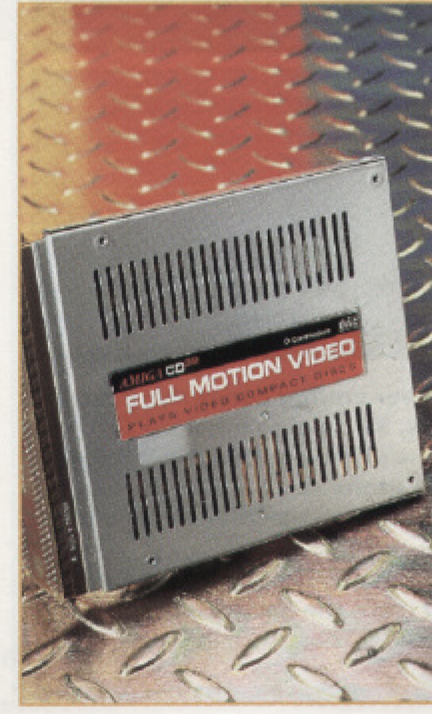
Based on the MPEG1 standard (a system agreed by Commodore, Phillips, Sony, JVC. Matsushita and Paramount Home Video, and otherwise known as Video CD), the new cartridge allows the CD32 to play video footage moving at 25 to 30 frames per second, complete with a digital CD soundtrack.

Commodore has been working closely with a number of record companies with a view to seeing a number of music videos produced for the new format - the first results of this will be Queen's Box of Flix and The Video Collection from David Bowie.

Commenting for Commodore, joint UK managing director David Pleasance says: "Amiga CD32 cannot be matched as a games machine, and now it can offer movies and music video too. It really is the first machine on the market to offer all forms of electronic entertainment in one box."

Continuing the theme of blowing the CD32's trumpet, Commodore had a little laugh at Sega's expense at the end of 1993 by renting out a convenient poster site on London's Cromwell Road for the 'To Be This Good Will Take Sega Ages' advert. No-one at Sega was available for comment, but if you look carefully at the picture above, you can see that Sonic the Hedgehog appears to be scowling above the Sega building's main entrance.





The final chapter in this month's increasingly bizarre CD32 news came when a number of the new machines ended up in one of London's most famous museums. But no, this isn't just another case of technology being outdated almost as soon as it's arrived - the machines have actually been incorporated into a new audio-visual display in the recently reopened London Transport Museum.

In all, a total of 109 machines are used to text, animation, video and sound effects for an interactive touch-screen demonstration which delivers a range of information on all the Capital's forms of transport for the last 100 years and more - the highlight of which is a series of three historical underground simulators, which recreate train rides form 1890, 1938 and 1992.

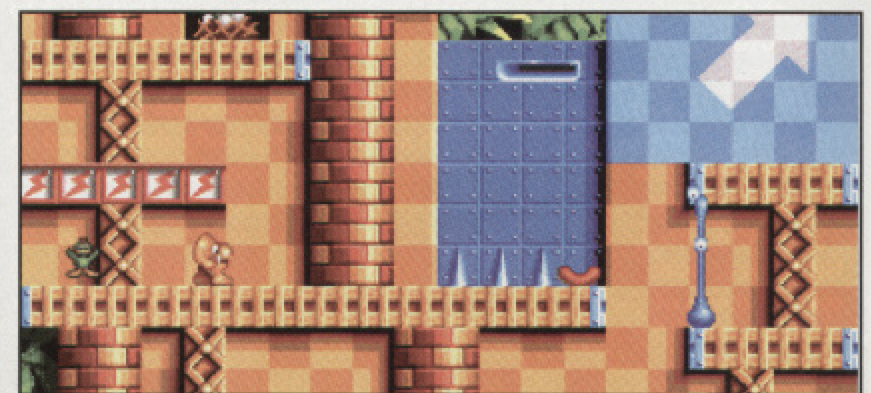


CD32 GETS MORE GAMES

System 3, one of the longest-serving of all Amiga games developers, is to make its CD32 debut with the relaunch of five of its classics for the new CD machine.

Retailing at the remarkably reasonable price of £14.99 apiece, the five titles in question are Putty, International Karate, Last Ninja 3, Flimbo's Quest and Myth. All five will be available shortly, and will be joined by further re-releases later in the year.

"The CD format is a first and exciting departure for us and it looks brilliant," says System 3's managing director Mark Cale. "Imagine stacking your hottest software alongside your favourite music CDs - this has got to be the way of the future."



THOMAS CERTIFIED

While the rest of the computer games business dillies and dallies about whether or not to classify its wares using movie-style age certificates, Alternative has grabbed the bull by the horns and had many of its own games rated.

However, this has nothing at all to do with their unsuitability for a younger audience - quite the opposite in fact, as the games in question have been granted a Uc label, demonstrating that they are particularly suitable for young children.

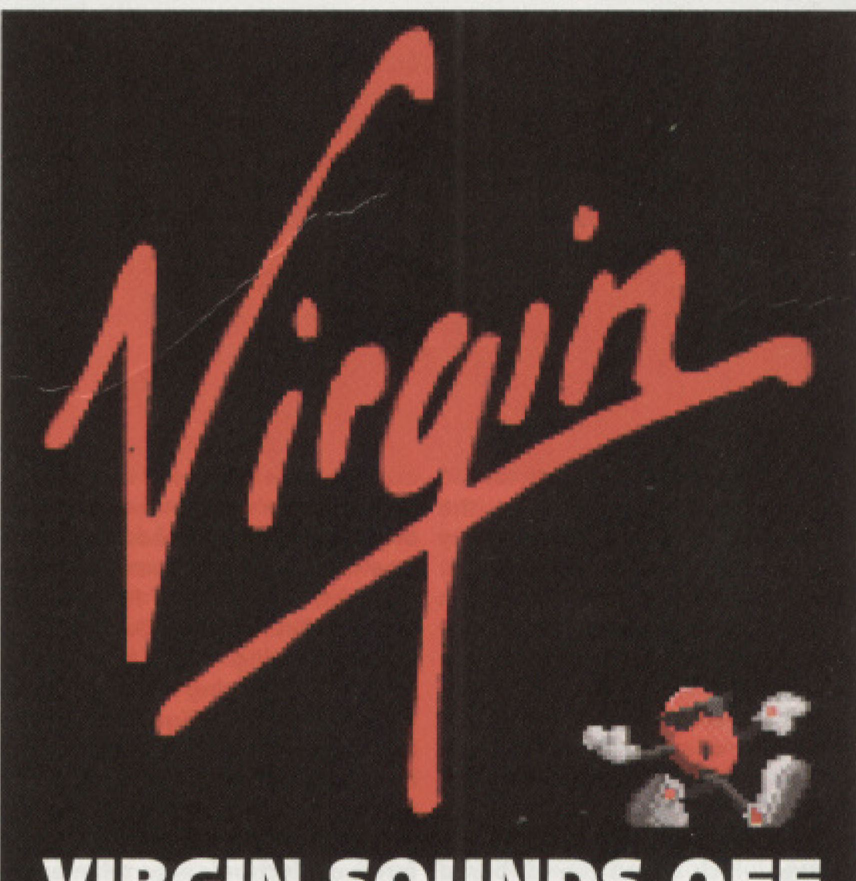
The games affected include Thomas the Tank Engine, Postman Pat, and Sooty in Sweep, in fact any game which appears on Alternative's 'The Children's Collection' label. "Last year we brought together all of younger games software under a single label," explains Alternative's David Watkins, "and these new classifications are simply an extension of that policy."



Moving slightly up the age scale, Alternative has also updated another of last year's releases, Jet Strike, and now makes the bold claim that it could become the World's first ever 'never ending computer game'.

To complement the 100 missions, 35 training missions and 40 aircraft and weapons offered in the original game, the publisher plans to add extra missions, weapons and data to the game through cover-mounted disks on Amiga magazines and the use of a telephone helpline.

In addition to this, the company also has plans to announce a competition for those users who reach the game's 'apocalypse' missions.



VIRGIN SOUNDS OFF

With CD-ROM becoming the most over-used acronym in the book, the Virgin group has decided to leap headlong into the business of producing interactive CD products with the launch of a whole new company, Virgin Sound And Vision.

While Virgin Interactive Entertainment (aka Virgin Games) will continue to publish all games titles - even those for CD32 - the new company will look after all non-games software, including education, interactive music and reference titles. "We believe that the advent of CD-ROM as a mainstream media will lead to a significant increase in the size of the market for interactive education and information," offers Virgin Communication boss Robert Devereux.



FOX HITS OUT

20th Century Fox, the multi-national, multi-media, multi-millionaire company responsible for such smash hits as The Simpsons, the Alien series and the Home Alone movies, looks likely to set up its own games division this year.

Up until now, the Fox group (which is part of Rupert Murdoch's massive media empire) has licensed out its characters and film titles to other software publishers, including Acclaim and Ocean, for use in games. Soon, however, it seems that Fox will have its own games company to look after these creations.

"Yes, we have talked about setting up a games division," confirms Al Ovadia, president of 20th Century Fox Licensing and Merchandising, "and if we were going to move then it would probably be this year."

The current move towards CD-based games machines and full-motion video technology means that more and more film companies are likely to look into the games business over the next year or two - Paramount is another major Hollywood player which is currently showing an interest.

Two major Fox movies due out in the next 12 months are The Pagemaster (starring Mccauley Culkin) and Baby's Day Out from director John Hughes.



CHARTS

1	Mortal Kombat	Virgin
2	The Settlers	Blue Byte
3	Frontier: Elite 2	Gametek
4	Cannon Fodder	Virgin
5	Premier Manager 2	Gremlin
6	Championship Manager 2	Domark
7	Jurassic Park	Ocean
8	Alien Breed 2	Team 17
9	F-117A Stealh Fighter 2	MicroProse
10	Zool 2	Gremlin

Charts supplied by Virgin Games Centre

STRIP TEASERS

● ...The majority of parents believe that too much time spent playing video games is bad for you. This finding comes from a survey by BMRB International, which concluded that 76 per cent of the parents believed that their own children spent too much time playing games, while 60 percent felt that this would have harmful consequences...

● ...Karaoke kings (and, of course, queens) will soon be able to use their CD32 machine to improve their vocal versatility, as Karaoke pioneer Arbiter is to publish a range of 2,000 singalong CDs especially for use with the new player. Each disc will contain six backing tracks and lyrics, with featured artists ranging from ABBA to rap stars...

● ...Those of you interested in the 'digital world' may like to track down a copy of The Hacker Crackdown, the book from Bruce Sterling (novelist, computer nut and journalist). A work of non-fiction, The Hacker Crackdown explores the world of computer hackers and 'phone 'phreaks' and their effect on major corporations and the 'cyberspace' in general. Sterling has previously collaborated with William Gibson on The Difference Engine...

● ...Oops! Due to anybody's fault other than our own, a couple of the Bumper Festive Compo's anagrams were misprinted. We'll discount those questions (6 and 7) from the competition (i.e. everyone will get those two right) and extend the closing date to 28th March. So get those entries in...


PC Screen shot


AMIGA

CU AMIGA

97%

"The ultimate in space adventure, Frontier is the single most important step forward for games this decade."


PC ZONE

95%

"Unrivalled classic, nothing comes close."

DA
BRA
PRES

FRON

E L

AMIGA ACTION

93%

"Frontier is probably the best game I have ever played. This offers everything you could want in a game of this type."

THE ONE

96%

KONAMI

only the very best

Available on PC,


A Screen shot


PC Screen shot

VID
BEN
ENTS

TIER

I T E

C & VG
96%
"One of, if not the, biggest games ever, Frontier is a title that will make the rest of your software collection obsolete."

AMIGA FORMAT
90%
"Frontier sucks you in and keeps you hostage. It's a monster."

PC REVIEW
9/10
"The best space game ever."

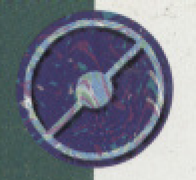
"Like Elite before it, Frontier is a game that rises above its feeble competitors like a colossus and will be talked about in awe for years to come. It's better than you could ever have dreamed it to be."

GAMETEK

mature with time

AMIGA, ATARI ST

by Konami. Distributed by Gametek



Letters

Oh poo. Christmas is long gone, and all the pressies have been unwrapped. Did you get anything juicy? Drop us a note and let us know what you did and what you did not. Address your queries and moans to: Letters, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3AU. Or Fax us on: (071) 972 6710.

CRAP GAMES

Dear The One,
I'm fed up of people writing in and complaining about too much space being given to crap game reviews. I love 'em! It's much more fun to read a review if someone is taking the hiss. Every time my boyfriend buys your wonderful magazine, I go straight to the review pages and look for the most crap scores and have a great time wondering how anyone could dare release such a game and whether someone will buy it. So I say - MORE SPACE FOR THE CRAP GAMES!

Kerry Ireland, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Tell you what, Kerry. Rather than looking through your boyfriend's issue of The One, why not buy your own? Then you could cut out those hilarious reviews of duff games and paste them into a scrapbook, eventually building up a gag-packed catalogue of crapness. Or something. (This, of course, is a rather desperate attempt on my part to increase the magazine's circulation.)

MORE GORE PLEASE

Dear The One,
I am writing to reply to Simon Rizzello's October letter complaining about "dead and mutilated corpses" in Alien Breed 2. He says that he likes atmosphere in games but, obviously, these images only help to deepen the atmosphere. This is the reason why they have been included, not because Team 17 "want a laugh." As for his comments about things like this only strengthening the argument for giving computer games age certificates - well, it's just boll***s, isn't it!?

Almost all computer games involves some form of violence. Take Syndicate, for example: dead bodies everywhere - brilliant game. (Why no A1200 version? And don't tell us the old story of "it wasn't fast enough!") Fireforce - mass amounts of killing, but still a great game. I could go on for ages, but I hope I have proved my point. I haven't seen any letters of complaint about previous games with violence in them.

If programmers are concerned about losing support if their games are considered too violent (like Mortal Kombat on the SNES), perhaps an option in the game itself would let people choose for themselves whether they want to be exposed to this sort of violence or not.

Alex Warren, Radley College, Oxon.

The idea of having a 'Gore On/Off' option is a nice one (it was actually featured in the old Mindscape game Moonstone), but how many young kids in the privacy of their own bedrooms are really going to go "Umm, Mummy wouldn't like me seeing nasty things - I'd better turn the gore off."

A1200 BLUES

Dear The One,
I would like to start off by saying what an excellent point Barnaby Ingram made in the last issue. Mr Ingram bought the A500/600 copy of Wing Commander only to find out seven months later that there's an A1200 version nestling on the shelves. If you were to go back to the November issue, you'd find that Darren Broughton had the same problem. So the A1200 owners have a bit of a problem at the moment.

What's the problem, I hear you ask? Well, if you're lucky enough to own last month's issue, skip to page 83 and there should be a review of the A500/600 version of Cannon Fodder. Now take a close look at the A1200 box at the bottom of the page. It says "You lucky A1200 owners will probably be getting a souped-up version".

Now what are A1200 owners meant to do? Rush out and buy the excellent looking Cannon Fodder only to find out that they will bring out an A1200 version? Or wait and wait (God knows how long) for the A1200 version only to find out they might not be doing one.

This is just one example but believe me it's happening time and time again. It's getting to the point where I've stopped buying A500/600 software for my A1200. I'm just going to wait for all the A1200 software to be released. I've waited one year so I don't mind waiting another (no, no, no, dammit, no).

Sidney Vicious, Cumbria.

It's a problem, you're right. As from next month, we'll be printing current release dates for every game due out in the next six months or so. This will be updated every month, and should help you keep a track of any games, A1200-specific or otherwise, in the pipeline.

COMMODORE BORE

Dear The One,
Being an A1200 owner I have become increasingly worried, not to mention downright annoyed, ever since I first saw the CD32's impressive technical capabilities. Not by the fact that Commodore have introduced such a machine just nine months after the release of the A1200 (which I think was a wise and essential move on their part, in the face of stiff competition from Sega and Nintendo with their crap consoles and vastly overpriced games), but because it is simply a superior machine to the A1200, therefore making the A1200 obsolete, as far as games are concerned anyway.

Of course, this is due to the much vaunted new 3D graphics chip employed in the CD32's hardware but, stupidly, not in the A1200's. What on Earth are Commodore playing at? I mean, already, we're hearing about Bullfrog abandoning any ideas of a 256-colour version of Syndicate because it would slow down too much, but pressing ahead with a CD32-specific version, because of that chip.

An option would be to wait (how long?) for the new A1200 CD drive, but unless some major miracle happens during this drive's development, the A1200 with a CD drive still won't be on a par with the CD32. Yup, because of that chip again.

Maybe I'm wrong, I don't know. I'm hoping you can put me right because I don't want to sell my A1200 to get a CD32, mainly because of the lack of CD32 games at present and the fact that I still enjoy my floppy games too much.

Mark Bobowicz, London.

The news is even worse that that, Mark, as Commodore apparently have put plans for an A1200 CD drive on the backburner - a rather stupid move, if you ask me. But you never know - a third-party hardware manufacturer may step in to save the day with their own drive. Whether such a drive would have the special chip built-in (which is copyrighted to Commodore) is unlikely, however.

WHERE IS LOVE?

Dear The One,
In May I bought an A1200 after seeing it featured in magazines and on TV. Every article I saw about this 'wonder machine' promised improved graphics and sound, and said that it was the future of computer games. Hundreds of special versions of games were also promised. Over a year after its release there are no games that make full use of the machine's capa-

MORTAL KWESTION!

Time again to dress David Upchurch in silly costumes and let him battle against some of the toughest letters in the world. FIGHT!

Dear The One,
Please can you answer these questions for me:
(1) Any news on CD32 Syndicate?
(2) What the hell has happened to Rookies and Ruff 'n' Tumble?
(3) Have you noticed that whenever you do a multi-part WIP on a game, it's always a sequel, like Frontier, Alien Breed, Uridium, Heimdall?
(4) Can someone tell Chris Davis to shoot himself?
(5) Are you going to offer a decent subscription offer?
(6) Got anything on Akira yet?

**Jonathon Pendleton,
Hayling Island.**

(1) Not as yet. We'll keep you posted.
(2) The guy who was programming Rookies left Virgin to work for Sega, so it now seems likely that the game will never be completed. Boo-hoo! There's better news on Ruff 'n' Tumble, however, which is still steaming along and should be ready for an Easter release - look out for a no-doubt-exclusive WIP soon.
(3) Hey, you're right. Strange, huh?
(4) Er... no.
(5) Not yet, but there'll be some hotter-than-hot news soon.

Dear The One,
Please could you answer a few questions for me:
(1) Why do release dates keep changing? One game I'm waiting for is TFX but so far I've seen three release dates and now it won't be out 'till early 1994! Why?
(2) I own an A1200 and want a hard drive. Not wanting to invalidate my warranty, I thought I would get an Overdrive 35 to fit on the side. Are they really any good? When Commodore bring out the CD32 add-on, will it have to be in the same slot as the Overdrive 35?
(3) With software theft increasing, what do you think will happen to floppy drive computers? I read that more and more companies are thinking of pulling out of the Amiga games market. What is your view on the subject - will we end up swapping disks drives for CD drives or an end to the computer as we know it?

**J. Bentley,
Somerset.**

(1) A whole host of reason, 'J.' Most often it's due to the fact that unforeseen problems have arisen with the coding, meaning the project is therefore taking longer to complete than anticipated. Occasionally a company will have finished a game and be holding it back for release at a peak software selling time, like Christmas, but this is very rare. Have patience - I'm sure TFX will be worth the wait.
(2) According to my CU Amiga chums, the Overdrive is an excellent hard drive so buy with confidence. As mentioned elsewhere Commodore have put off plans for a CD-ROM drive for the A1200, so your guess is as good as mine (or Commodore's) as to where it'll plug in should it ever, eventually, appear.
(3) Many companies are keen to move into CD game development, partly for the reduced piracy but mainly for the greater game design opportunities it offers. However, with so many people still owning floppy-based systems I think it'll be a while before all software goes 'CD only'.

Dear The One,
(1) I was watching Gamesmaster, when Les Ferdinand and Vinny Jones played the amazing FIFA Soccer, and being a football fan, was wondering will there be an Amiga version? If so, when will it come out?
(2) I have heard rumours that if Striker 2 comes out they are going to have extra features like a ref and linesmen, offsides, a scoreboard, proper names and goal scorers, more crowd noises and selectable teams. I don't believe any of this and thought you might know something.

**Ryan Davy,
Cheshire.**

(1) No definite news yet, although there are rumours of something big coming our way from EA in the Summer, so you never know...
(2) Try tuning in next month, Ryan...

Dear The One,
I have recently purchased an A1200 and I was wondering if Little Computer People is available for it. I have played it on my friend's Commodore 64 and really enjoyed it. Also, can I buy Space Crusade for the A1200?

**Mark Smith,
Chelmsford, Essex.**

Sorry to disappoint you Mark, but Little Computer People never made it to the Amiga. Shame, because it's a great program, isn't it? On a brighter note, Space Crusade is now available at budget price from GBH and should be compatible with your A1200, although bear in mind that it's not enhanced in any way.

Dear The One,
I have just bought an A1200 and I would be grateful if you could answer these questions for me.
(1) Is there any way to make games like The Humans compatible with the A1200?
(2) Is there going to be another Speedball?

**Robert Kennedy,
Liverpool.**

(1) The only thing I can suggest is try the following: Turn off your Amiga, wait thirty seconds or so and then turn it on again, holding down both of the mouse buttons as you do so. Keep the buttons depressed until a set-up menu appears.

Click on the 'Boot Options...' box to go to a sub-menu, where you should click on the box next to 'Disable CPU caches' so that a tick appears in it. Now click on 'Use' to return to the main menu.

Now click on the 'Display Options...' box to go to yet another sub-menu. Click on the box next to 'Original Chipset' so that a tick appears in it, then click on 'Use'.

You should be back at the main menu again. Bung your game disk in the drive and click on 'Use' again. There's a good chance your game will work now. If this does no good, then I'm afraid the game is completely incompatible with your new Amiga. Sorry!
(2) There's no sign of a Speedball 3 on the horizon. I'm not surprised really - after all, I think Speedball 2 said it all as far as futuresport games go.

bilities. There are games like Zool and Oscar which have improved graphics, but there are too few of these and they are not much improved otherwise.

Any games that do use all the A1200's extra power are no good anyway. For example, you only gave Diggers 76% in its review in the November issue. I was looking forward to the ill-fated A1200 Syndicate, which was to have hi-res graphics and improved sound. The only forthcoming game that looks good for the A1200 is TFX. One game that would especially benefit from an A1200 version would be Micro Machines (with parallax backgrounds), as would Frontier.

A lot of programmers seem to have forgotten the A1200 with the release of the CD32. So how about some more A1200 games?

**James Miller,
Rugby.**

It's not quite that grim! The A1200 bandwagon IS starting to steamroll - a couple of months ago we had Overkill and only this month we've got news on Skeleton Krew which is being developed specifically for the A1200. And then you've already had enhanced versions of games like Body Blows Galactic, Alien Breed 2 and Simon the Sorcerer which offer significant improvements over their A500/600 counterparts.

DUFF DISK DOOM

Dear The One,
I have become increasingly frustrated at the alarmingly high fault rate of your cover disks. Over the last year I have purchased your magazine on seven occasions, and on three of the issues one disk was faulty. This month I was delighted to be given the chance to sample Alien Breed 2, Bob's Bad Day and Brian The Lion, but to my disgust I discovered that not one but both disks refused to load.

So here I am again, after paying nearly four quid for your magazine, having to spend another 58p to replace the faulty disks - not to mention the delay of up to four weeks. Why should your customers be expected not only to pay the postage, but also to send a S.A.E.

If you were to increase the quality of your assurance checks on your disks then I feel mine and others perception of your magazine would revert back to the 97% it once was.

**Paul Stansfield.
Wilts.**

Just 97%, Paul? But seriously, I'm sorry about your disk problems - it would appear that you've been the victim of



LETTERS

some exceedingly bad luck. Anybody else out there having similar problems?

BAD AD? OR SAD?

Dear the One,
I am writing to you about a few things that have been bothering me over the past few weeks.

The first thing that started my blood boiling was after seeing Putty, Chuck Rock 2, Crazy Cars 3, Jaguar XJ220, Zool and Lotus all pinched by the consoles. Then I turn on the TV to find the dismaying news that possibly the finest Amiga game of all time - Sensible Soccer - has also been nicked. How come they get all of our best games and we get none of theirs?

Next up is Commodore's CD32 advert. I don't know about you, but I would definitely rather have seen more of the machine's capabilities than professors and aliens. Also, I reckon that Commodore would have been far better signing up a software house (like Team 17) and offering them wads of money to produce 'killer' games especially for the Amiga family, as this would give them a far better chance of competing with the consoles and their Sonics and Marios.

Finally, after seeing games such as Stardust, Brian The Lion, Rise Of The Robots and Elfmania appearing, why are software companies still saying that they have pushed the Amiga as far as it can go. Surely with games as technically stunning as these, the Amiga is still in its prime, not nearing the grave.

R. Locke,
Liverpool.

Yeah, the CD32 advert was a bit tragic, wasn't it? At least we know what poor old Charlie from out of the Darling Buds Of May is up to these days. "So many colours..." Hmmm, yes. As for the Amiga being dead, well... that's clearly untrue. There is, as they say, a lot of life left in the old dog yet.

FUTURE FEAR

Dear The One,
Do you think the future of us A500+ owners (sad 16-bit machines) is a bleak one? Is software support just eventually going to stop for the A500, and thus the Amiga will become the next Atari ST, or are the manufacturers going to make two versions which are compatible with both the A500 and the A1200? The software developers must also remember that there are more A500s than A1200s out there. Please answer my questions and put me out of my misery.

H. Patel,
Dulwich.

The A500/600 is still the machine that most developers target their games at, precisely because there are so many owners of those machines out there, so I don't think you need to worry about games drying up for a long while yet. At the moment most A1200 games are versions of A500/600 games that have been tweaked up here and there. But what I wouldn't be surprised to see happening eventually, however, is games being developed for the A1200 or CD32 first and then being 'stripped down' for the A500/600. Either way, though, you'll still be catered for.

LET ME IN!

Dear The One,
While I was reading through my most recent issue of The One, I thought, 'Something's missing here. Why don't they have more things for readers to join in?' I began to think about this more and more and so here are a few things I came up with. I hope you think about using a couple of them as they might encourage more people to change from reading the other drivel on the newsy shelves to reading your most excellent magazine.

You could have something where readers send in their own reviews of games and every month you could include the best ones in the magazine. I have seen some other crappy mags running one-off competitions like this but I think something like this every month would be quite popular.

What about having a compo every month where you pick a game and all the readers send in their best times and scores? You could build up a 'Hall Of Fame' for all the best players, and maybe even pick all the best and bring them to your offices to have a championship to find the best player at a certain game.

Lastly, could you think about doing a readers' Top 50 Games or something like that and get everyone to write down their Top 20 and then all the games get put in order of the amount of votes they get.

Colin Gray,
Ayrshire, Scotland.

Funny you should ask about about getting readers more involved in the mag, as we've got some plans along those lines that we'll be unveiling in the coming months. Keep an eye out for them...

HATE MAIL

Dear The One,
I just decided after reading your latest magazine that I would write to you with my views on the Amiga. I have owned an A500+ for the past 2 years now, and due to Commodore's loyalty (or lack of it as the case may be) I have made the wise decision to bale out now and purchase a better piece of kit - i.e. a spanking new SNES with the brilliant cartridge Street Fighter 2 Turbo - which is worth the price of the machine itself compared to the extremely cack version on the humble Amiga.

However, this is not my main reason for buying Nintendo. The reason is due to Commodore being such a bunch of gits. I mean, what other company in the computer industry do you know that insists on replacing one of its models after six months, i.e. the A500 being replaced by the A600, and that in turn being replaced by the A1200? Talk about something to seriously hiss people off! By the end of next year they'll probably have replaced the A1200 with some other machine to further annoy everybody.

And then there's the CD32. Oh dear, what an awful machine if ever I saw one. It looks like something that could have been used in Doctor Who with all those straight and sharp edges, and that colour is possibly worse than the colour casing of the BBC Model B, and that's saying something!

Then there's the games. There may well be some well 'ard games on the Amiga such as Syndicate, Frontier and Gunship 2000 to name but a few, but they often tend to slow down when the screen becomes cluttered. When compared to the SNES library of games (there may not be as many, but remember it's quality that counts, not quantity) there's simply no competition with such games as Jurassic Park and Alien 3, all displayed in glorious Mode 7 graphics with stereo sound.

So one piece of advice to all you people still owning an Amiga of some kind - get a life, get a SNES!

James Crone,
Scotland.

Hey James, if you're happy playing endless identikit platformers, shoot-'em-ups and beat-'em-ups then fine, you stick with your SNES. Unfortunately, I prefer my games to have a bit of variety and originality in them, so I think I'll stay with the Amiga thank you very much.

PROTECT ME!

Dear The One,
First of all I want to start by saying that I'm against software piracy as it only damages the industry, but I'd also like to say that nothing gets on my nerves more than software protection that goes over the top.

Examples? Okay, Flashback. Why don't they give you a page number? Instead, you have to scan the whole manual looking for a tiny picture that looks much like the rest. The worst case I've run into has to be that nightmare protection that they've put into Elite 2. They've truly gone too far, having to enter a word almost every time you dock - pain in the bot', big time.

What I'm basically trying to say is, I understand the need for software protection, but don't make us honest original-buying folk suffer while other people with hacked copies of games have the luxury of not having to deal with over-the-top copy protection.

Colin Bell,
Hampshire.

Hey, don't moan at the programmers - moan at the pirates. Until they stop their evil ways, copy protection is an annoying game feature we're all going to have to live with.

RATINGS RANT

Dear The One,
I've only been regularly collecting computer magazines for around eight months. I have a fair collection of many different Amiga magazines and have found that The One is the best of the bunch. However, there's one thing I have noticed about the reviews in the different magazines I've bought.

What I've noticed is the differences in various magazines' overall marks. You reviewed Frontier: Elite 2 and gave it an astounding 96%, but I noticed in a different magazine that it was given a mediocre 75%. Another example of this is Mindscape's Alfred Chicken - you gave it a very respectable 86% (Recommended it, in fact) , while another Amiga games magazine gave it a piffling 65%.

My question is, who should I believe? I mean, say if I bought Frontier because of the 96% mark you awarded it, and when I played it I found that 75% was the mark I would have given it. I would have wasted £34.99. What on Earth should I do?

Ben Fitton,
Brighurst.

This is always going to be a problem, because reviewing is a subjective art. One man's meat is another man's poison, as the saying goes. At The One we all have a say on how good or bad we think a game is and what the final mark should be, in order to get a balanced view of each game's quality. The best thing to do is is compare how the various mags rated the old games in your collection, and then see who you agree with most and stick with them.

THE ONE

We may not be The Sun but we're just as capable of creating our own computer game. It's brilliant and you can read all about it here in this EXCLUSIVE first look!

Every journalist dreams of creating his own game and then using the pages of his magazine to promote it. For the editorial team of Britain's biggest and best Amiga games magazine this dream is about to come true as they've recently announced the development of their new hit Snackerama, an arcade game based around the often 'hilarious' exploits of David Upchurch with Simon Byron, Matt Broughton and Jenny Abrook making very occasional guest appearances. And by all accounts it's going to be One-derful!

It took Gremlin at least two years to come up with their best-selling Zool game - but David Upchurch, Snackerama's lead programmer, has managed to pull off the impossible by dreaming up the game's concept within two minutes.

"I was drunk," admits David, "and I'd just finished reading about The Sun's great game Snapperazzi which gave me the idea. I wanted to make loads of money with the least possible effort and the concept of creating a computer game and hyping it myself seemed like the perfect solution. I can do that, you see, because I'm the Editor and what I say goes. It doesn't matter that I can't program to save my life - if you've got the powerful arm of the media behind you it's amazing what dross you can get away with. Can you pass the cake, please? Etc."

Although the team are virtually guaranteed to become millionaires overnight as the hundreds of thousands of The One readers rush out and snap up Snackerama, money wasn't David's primary goal.

"If nothing else, the game's concept is fairly unique - and that's intentional," reckons David. "We decided that although we were bound to make loads of money, we didn't want to short-change the kids with a tried and tested formula - we wanted to create a whole new genre; something totally radical and innovative. So we made Snackerama a platform game. And not a very good one at that."

Of course, Snackerama hasn't always been crap. The idea was actually quite a good one and had a lot of potential. But then again when you're a few sheets to the wind so do things like putting road cones on your head and marching down the road singing that song from Snow White and the Seven Dwarves about how you're off to work.

"I think the idea was fine. Once," explains David. "Movie licences and TV tie-ins have always sold well - look at Darkman - great film, er... What about The Running Man - great film, er... I know, take Robocop 3, for example - great game, er... Anyway, surely a game based around something as excellent as The One would make buckets of money.

"I reckon we're going to make at least forty trillion earth pounds each," estimates David. "We'll never have to work again - we'll be so rich we'll be able to live on the moon and drive our own personal space ships to the office. I'm looking to open my own cake shop with the profits and I'll be able to send Simon to a place where his severe personality disorder can be analysed. Matt will be able to fork out on a razor now and again to prevent that awful case of face fungus he develops occasionally and Jenny will no doubt build her own health farm or something."

In Snackerama, you take control of David in his quest to find the fabled Seven Cakes of Cakeland. His search takes him through Toy Land, Ice World, Sweet Land and many other weird and wonderful locations previously unseen in platform games. It's obvious that originality is high on the team's agenda.

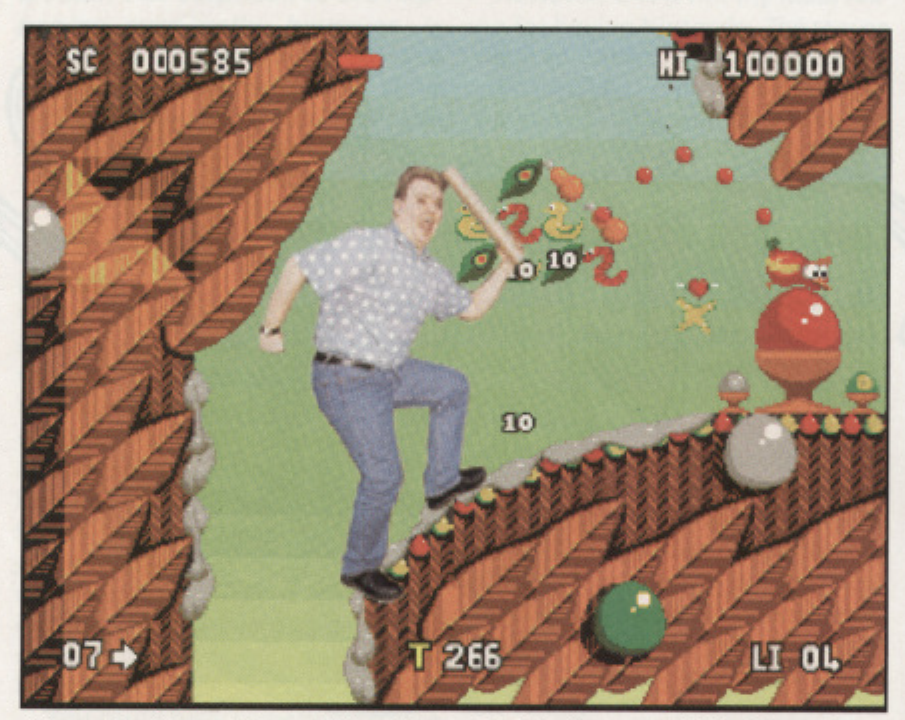
"We deliberately didn't look at any other games," reveals David, "because we wanted to keep Snackerama original and fresh. Although I did play Zool quite extensively. And Soccer Kid. And Yo! Jo! And the Lovers' Guide on PC CD-ROM. And..."

Although at first glance Snackerama may bear some similarities to many recent releases, David is keen to stress that the team aren't ripping software companies off and have steered well clear of directly copying other people's work.

"We would never do that," pleads David, "I couldn't live with myself if the punters felt like they were being ripped off. I'd like to think that the way I've approached Snackerama is very similar to the way I run The One - by getting other people to do all the work. Anyway, we only copy things out of Amiga Power and they haven't released a game yet. I wish they had, though.

"As you probably know, there are only seven possible plots for novels and all the books you read are variations on one of those themes. There's 'boy meets girl', 'bad boy

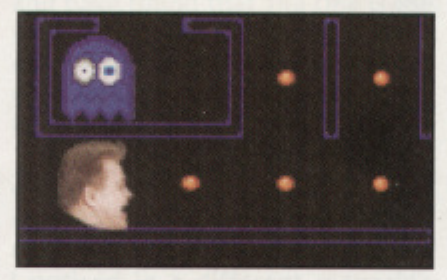
> "[Snackerama] is quite simply the best game ever."
> **Andrew Punter, a punter.**



(Above) David explains what's going on in this picture: "This is the main game which is probably the most ground-breaking aspect of Snackerama. I've eaten a mutant cake and turned into a ninja ant. Hang on, didn't Gremlin reveal that Zool isn't an ant? Damn. What am I then? No, I can't print that - The One is a family magazine. Do you know Gremlin's phone number, I'll give them a call and pretend I'm a punter. By the way, you're not recording this bit, are you?"

(Below) "In between each of the worlds is this space combat bit where you get to pilot your Eiger's Claw space ship to the next level," explains David. "I'm quite impressed with this sub-game - it manages to create a brilliant cinematic atmosphere by using rousing musical scores and shaded graphics which are rotated in real time. The death scene, shown here, is perhaps too realistic for younger children - it's possible the game will only be available to those aged over eighteens."





(Above) "This is my favourite sub-game," confesses David. "Here I am eating lots of yellow dots which are in fact pieces of the most sumptuous Milky Bar ever created. If I manage to mop up every piece of the bar then I journey back to the main game with a rich Heart Attack bonus and an extra two tons."



"The final sub-game takes place in what we call STS Land and is a frantic search for the last fabled cake," outlines David. "This last bit is actually a complete graphic adventure in itself and comes on nine separate disks with 'Simon The Sorcerer' tippexed out and 'Final Sub-Game' written over the top in biro. One of my mates managed to break into the Adventuresoft warehouses and nick loads of disks and by altering the main sprite to look like me we've created a whole new game. Don't tell anyone, though."



STEP BEYOND

PROJECT: Snackerama **PUBLISHER:** EMAP Images
DEVELOPER: The One Boyeez and Grrl: David Upchurch (project manager and programming); Simon Byron (graphic design); Matt Broughton (music and sound effects); Jenny Abrook (bit of a looker).
INITIATED: February 1993 **RELEASE:** February 1993

made good', and, er, five others, I expect, and it's the same for games. So it's inevitable that Snackerama's stages resemble other pieces of software. You can't say we've gone out of our way to copy them - after all, Wing Commander never had a picture of me in it, did it?"

So why is the game based primarily around David and why don't the rest of the team make more regular appearances? "I decided to base most of the action around me," says David, "mainly because I'm able to license myself to myself so that I can make a load more money. I'm also the easiest to draw - all you need are a few circles here and there, which even Simon, the graphic artist, can handle.

"Look at it this way: creating a Simon sprite involves sketching a pair of glasses and the size we're working to doesn't allow such intricate detail. Matt would have been okay and we did start off with him appearing more frequently but every time we got something bearing the slightest resemblance to him he decided to either grow a beard or shave it off, meaning that our game character was out of date before we'd even started. Therefore I'm the obvious choice for the main image."

Snackerama's development hasn't always been trouble-free, though. Only three hours after conception, the game hit a major snag - money, or lack of it, as David explains: "All that thinking was making me hungry and I was in desperate need of food. At the time, though, I had no readies because I'd spent it all in the pub the night before. So I set about getting a sponsorship deal."

Utilising his incredible negotiating skills, David rang up Dolmio Pizza and offered them the chance to appear in the game in exchange for a 12" cheese and tomato pizza and a can of Coke.

"At first they weren't too keen," he reveals, "and when I explained who I was they said they'd never heard of the magazine because they buy something good called Amiga Action. However, they didn't realise the degree of business experience that I have. I think the crying finally tipped things my way."

Snackerama undoubtedly pushes back the barriers of gaming. By successfully marrying media hype with consistently crap gameplay and blatant plagiarism, David and the rest of the team will rake in loads of cash. If only someone had thought of that before...



(Left) "The soccer sub-game is the most challenging of all. Your team consists of eleven Davids who are crap at running about. Every now and again one of your players will pull out a Mars Bar from his shorts (slowing him down) or shout off-screen for someone else to do the running about for him (stopping him in his tracks)."



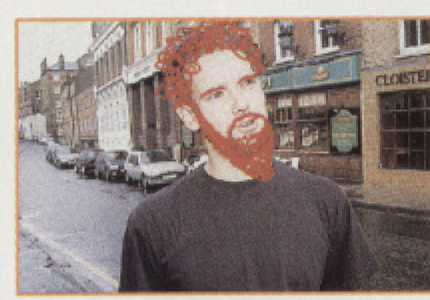
"This sub-game is known as the Dolmio 'You can't top our tip-tip toppings so don't try to' Pizza level. Here, I have to build as many pizza restaurants as I can within the time limit. Of course, it's not as easy as it sounds. I have to place my HQ and then send out lots of Davids to gather enough natural resources with which to construct the take-away branches. The graphics you see here are strictly Work in Progress - they need to be changed because we don't want Blue Byte finding out we've nicked their - oops!"

BUT WHAT DOES JOE SIX-PACK THINK...?

We asked your typical person on the street what their impressions of Snackerama were. But because the Amiga's power cable wouldn't stretch to the pavement, we showed them Zelda: Link's Awakening on the Gameboy (although we told them it was Snackerama) to find out what they thought of that instead.



Bespectacled Andrew Punter loved Snackerama: "This is quite simply the best game ever. Graphically, it's the best in its field with nicely detailed sprites. The puzzles are great and the action is non-stop. I'd buy it if it cost a million pounds."



ZZ Top guitarist Allister Reader wasn't initially over-keen: "I wasn't too sure about Snackerama, at first but now I just can't stop playing it. What do you mean I've said enough now? Geroff - I'm still playing it. Ooof - take that..."



With Allister off with our Gameboy, we had to ask Andrea Nother what her favourite magazine was: "You're from where? Never 'eard of it, mate. I subscribe to *CU* Amiga, but *The One* Amiga? Ha! No, you can't have my telephone number."



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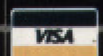
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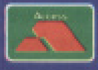


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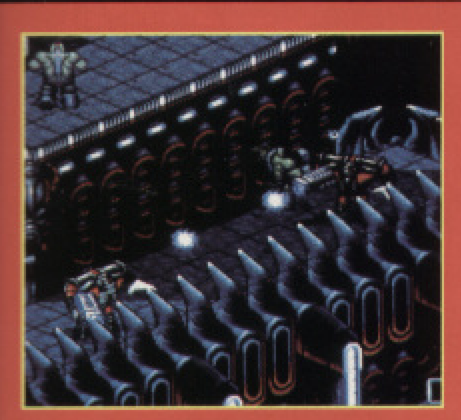
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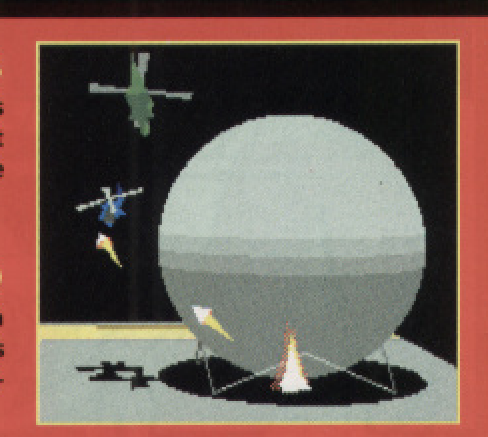
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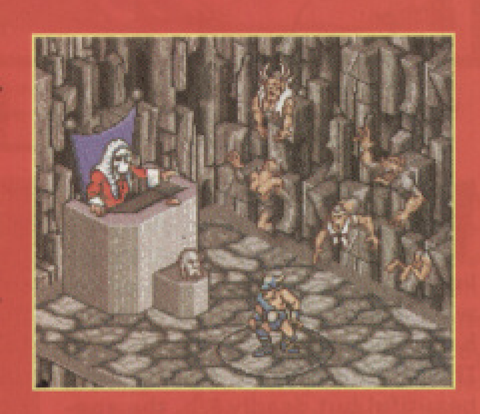
WORK IN PROGRESS

Jane had fallen into her wardrobe while hanging clothes and now, unbelievably, found herself face down in snow. She lifted her head and surveyed the surrounding landscape. There in the middle distance was a bespectacled boy chanting "Seven miles of bloody sand", while a golden-haired girl sat sobbing behind him. At that moment a man, naked apart from a guitar, ran past screaming "The Editor's coming! The Editor's coming!" as a hideous creature rolled after him then slowly headed towards Jane. "Oh my god!" gasped Jane. "Don't worry love" dribbled David, "It's just this months Work In Progress." And of course, it was.

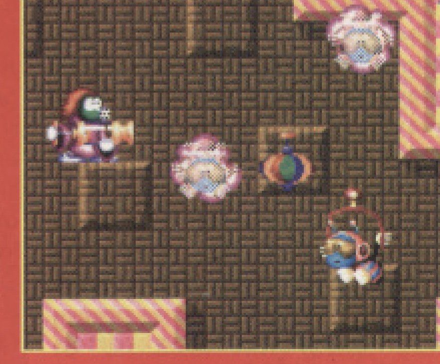




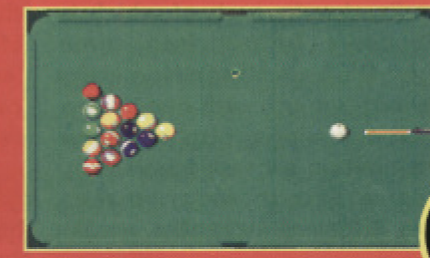




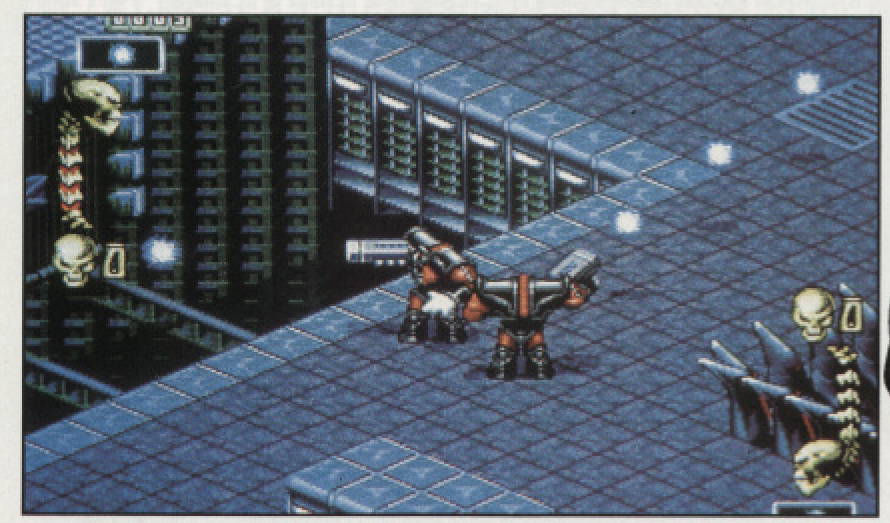








There are dark rumblings emanating from Core Design, and rumours of bio-enhanced corpses roaming the company's corridors and of a fiendish plot to take over the solar system. David Upchurch, brave as ever, grabs his crucifix and sets out to investigate...



A BLAST OF FRESH AIR

Who - or what - are the Skeleton Krew? That's the question on everybody's lips - well, it's the one on mine anyway. Weeell, they're four super-hard bio-engineered mercenaries. There's the psychotic Spine, the beautiful but deadly Rib, the ape-like Joint and the nominal brainbox Skulker - and they all look as scary as they sound.

They've been hired to save civilisation from the evil Moribund Kadaver and his Psykogenix Army. Kadaver, you see, is travelling around the solar system collecting components for a dreaded Psyko Machine. Should he complete it, no power on Earth (or any other planet, for that matter) will be able to stop him. The race is on...

Skeleton Krew is being written for the A1200, CD32 and Megadrive. The action is spread over five levels, each of which is split down further into three stages. It's basically an isometric-3D shoot-'em-up, with one or two players assuming control of a Krew member on a massive ass-kickin' spree. Each character possesses different strengths, weaknesses and special abilities so choose your on-screen persona wisely.

The stages are varied in style, with some featuring the Krew blasting their way around multiway scrolling complexes and others with the Krew riding hoverbikes and the like flying along 'forced scroll' Zaxxon-style canyons and valleys.

But enough of my yakkin'. Let's have a chat to some of the talents behind the game, starting with James Ryman. He's one of the game's graphic artists and joined Core after a stint at Rare, the company who used to be better known to millions as Ultimate Play The Game, creators of Spectrum classics such as Knightlore and Underwurlde.

He's hugely talented when it comes to the old pen and paper - in fact, he drew the spiffy black-and-white illustrations you see on these pages here and the excellent skull on this month's cover. Along with Guy Miller, the project's manager and fellow Rare escapee, it was he who came up with the initial look and design for the Skeleton Krew.

"We came up with the idea for the game just after we started at Core," he says. "Chris [Long, programmer] had the idea of an isometric shoot-'em-up. But we wanted a different feel to it. Chris envisaged big robots wandering about the screen causing mass destruction, but we wanted to steer well clear of the obvious Manga look which has been done to death recently.

"So I did a few sketches and started working on this idea of the game's characters having an exoskeleton [a robotic suit of armour to you]. And the look of the various creatures sort of developed from there."

The team then got together (over a pint, I'll wager) and threw about some plot ideas which Guy Miller eventually turned into the game's storyline (which, in full, is a lot more bizarre than the precis I gave you earlier). There then followed over a month of game design, the end result of which was a bulky document detailing every aspect of the gameplay, how the characters would behave, what types of enemies they'd encounter and even detailed maps of each level.

"Right from the start we decided to do as much planning and getting stuff down on paper as possible before committing anything to the screen," says James. "We thought that'd be the best idea, so that when it came down to doing the

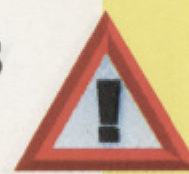
PROJECT: Skeleton Krew

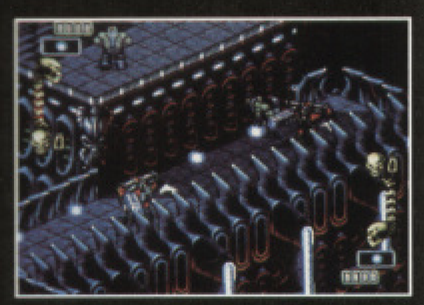
PUBLISHER: Core Design

DEVELOPER: In-house: Guy Miller (product manager, game design); James Ryman (game concept, graphics); Jason Gosling & Chris Long (programming); Heather Gibson (graphics); Bob Churchill (map design); Nathan McCree (music and sound effects).

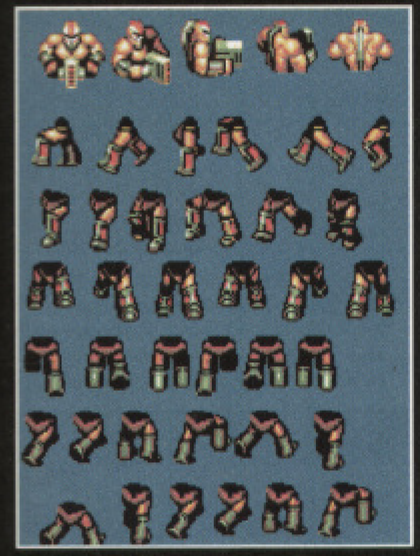
INITIATED: October 1993

RELEASE May 1994





(Above) The double Joints give the Psykogenix hordes some hassle.



(Above) An example of the sprite animation frames for one of the baddies. The sprites come in two halves allowing for greater freedom of movement.

(Below) "We wanted Skeleton Krew to be quite quite gory," says Jason, "so that it wasn't seen as just a child's game." Adds James: "There's plenty of violence but it's not 'nasty' violence. There's quite a bit of humour in there - it's true 'comic book' violence, I suppose. There's nothing too gratuitous."

graphics and the animations we'd have a far better concept of what we all wanted."

James is drawing the graphics for the Mega Drive version of Skeleton Krew (not that we'll hold that against him). How's he finding it, especially having to draw the graphics in a skewed isometric perspective? "It's okay," he replies. "Because of my comic influences I've always drawn figures from various angles so it's not been too much of a problem."

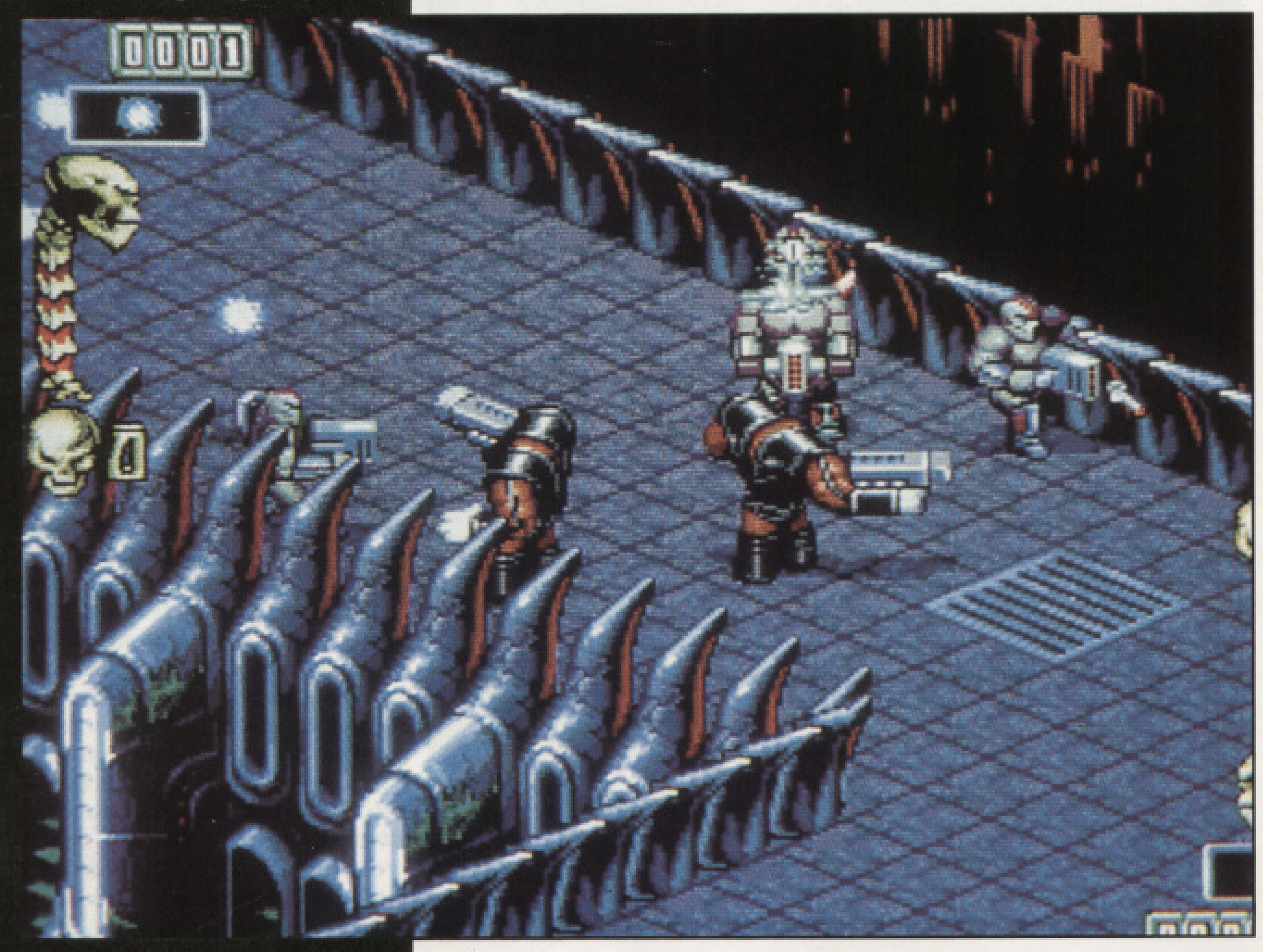
Doesn't he find the lack of colours frustrating? "I find the palette limitations quite handy actually, because there's only so much you can do within the constraints. If you're clever it can actually work to your advantage."

"There's plenty of violence but it's not 'nasty' violence. There's quite a bit of humour in there - it's true 'comic book' violence, I suppose. There's nothing too gratuitous."

James Ryman, Skeleton Krew graphic artist.



(Above) An example of James's full-oage comic artwork. Negotiations are currently underway with Dark Horse to turn the Krew into a proper comic!



James is currently beavering away on one of the 'forced scroll' substages, with the heroes aboard hoverbikes zooming along a canyon, blasting all and sundry. With the multiway scrolling sections already looking so good, why did James and the team make more work for themselves by creating these extra sequences? "We wanted as much variation in the gameplay as possible," says James. "It keeps you on your toes. It gets so tedious if you're just doing the same thing over and over again."

Of course, it's all very well James coming up with these great ideas but he's not the poor devil who's got to code them in. That's left to Jason Gosling, Skeleton Krew's Amiga programmer. But before we get down to technical nitty-gritty, Jason, answer me one question: why are there no plans for an A500/600 version. Why? WHY? TELL ME WHY!?

"Well, basically it's because the 500's a bit limited in what it'll let you do," mutters an apologetic Jason. "We wanted the game to have a lot of colours on-screen and obviously we also wanted it to be fast, and the A1200's the

machine that can let us do all that."

Although this is a bit of a downer for A500/600 owners, it's a boon for you AGA chipset types. At the moment the game features a gorgeous 32-colour full-screen background which scrolls so smoothly I thought the TV was on roller skates and, roaming about on top of that, are some of the biggest and most impressive sprites I've ever seen. These are drawn in a separate 32-colour palette to the backgrounds, making - calculators at the ready, maths whizzes! - a total of 64 colours on-screen. It looks lovely, I can tell you.

"We wanted the game to look very arcade-y," says Jason. "A lot of Amiga games have a very small game screen. They put bars down the side of the screen and don't use the full-screen height. We wanted to have as big a playing area as possible, especially as the sprites are so large."

This 'arcade feel' is heightened by the fact that the score panels are overlaid on the game window - typically these are stuck out of the way in a box at the bottom or side of the screen. Surprisingly these are drawn using just one 3-colour hardware sprite - and some ingenious technical malarkey. "By altering the Copper list I've made the sprite look like it's made up of more than three colours," explains Jason. "Then when the screen update gets halfway down the screen it swaps the sprite so that it's printed down the other side of the screen."

Clever, eh? This leaves seven hardware sprites which Jason is reserving for the big end-of-stage and end-of-level nasties, with the rest of the sprites all plotted by the game's software. "I'm aiming for about twelve software sprites on-screen in all, along with all the bullets and effects on top of that," adds Jason.

"It's a real problem keeping the game's speed up, given the size of the sprites," he continues. "We were going to have it so that you could have three characters in play at once, but that's probably asking too much of the machine and also it all gets a bit cramped on-screen, so now we're just sticking to two at maximum."

Each sprite you see is actually drawn in two sections, one for the top-half of the body and one for the bottom-half. This allows them to be rotated at the waist, giving them a much more realistic look. It's a feature that comes in particularly handy for Joint, the ape-like character, whose body can rotate a full 360°, allowing him to fire in any direction while walking in another.

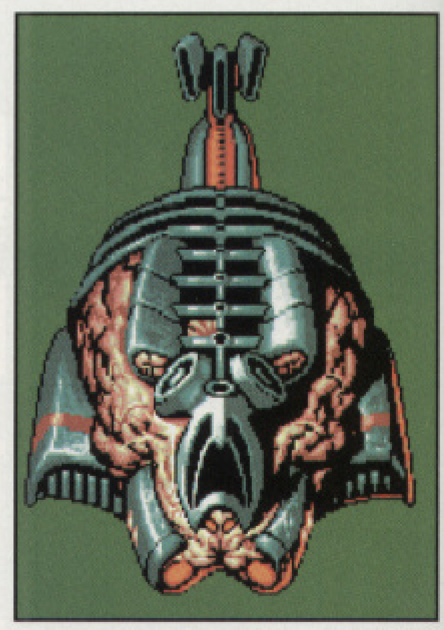
"We worked on that a lot, the way you can shoot in one direction and walk in another. It's going to be quite difficult getting that to work on a one-button joystick, so I'll probably have to make it so you use the keyboard as well. In fact, one of the toughest things was writing the game controls. I've rewritten the control routine about three or four times just to get it right.

"I want to make the controls so that the player can customise them as much as he wants to. I think a lot of games fall down on because their controls are a bit weird."

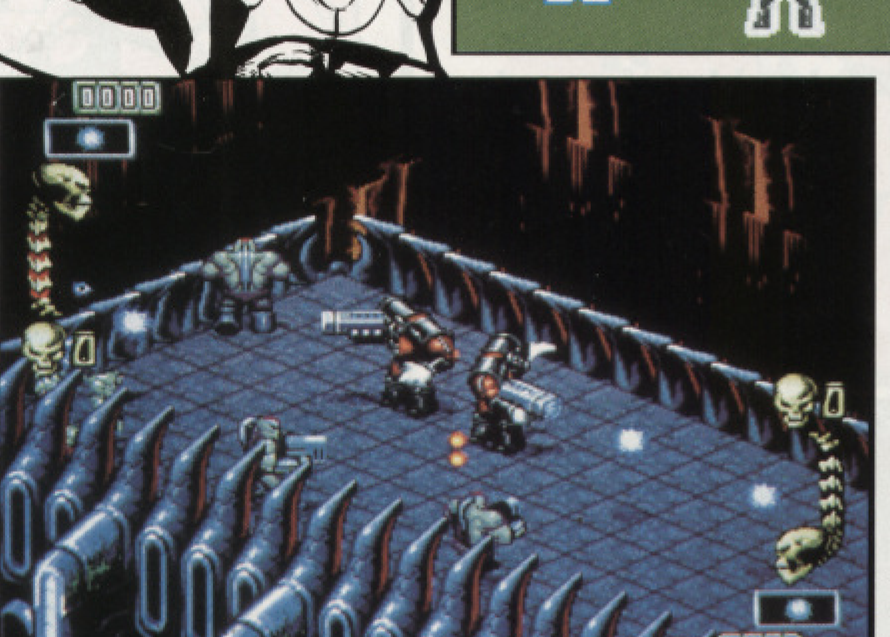
One thing you won't be getting in Skeleton Krew is lots of tedious levers to pull and boring buttons to press. "We didn't really want to get in to that sort of thing - we just wanted it to be an all-out shoot-'em-up and keep it as simple as possible," says Jason. "That said, there are secret areas you can discover if you have the time and inclination to look around for them. Like in one bit, there's a door and if you shoot it it'll fall down making a bridge over a gap, which'll lead you into a room full of bonuses."

It's all impressive stuff, that's for sure. And it's Jason's first major games programming job too!

> **"[On the NES] you only had a sixteen-colour palette to work with, so you can imagine I was in heaven when I came onto the Amiga and had all these extra colours."**
>
> Heather Gibson, Skeleton Krew graphic artist.

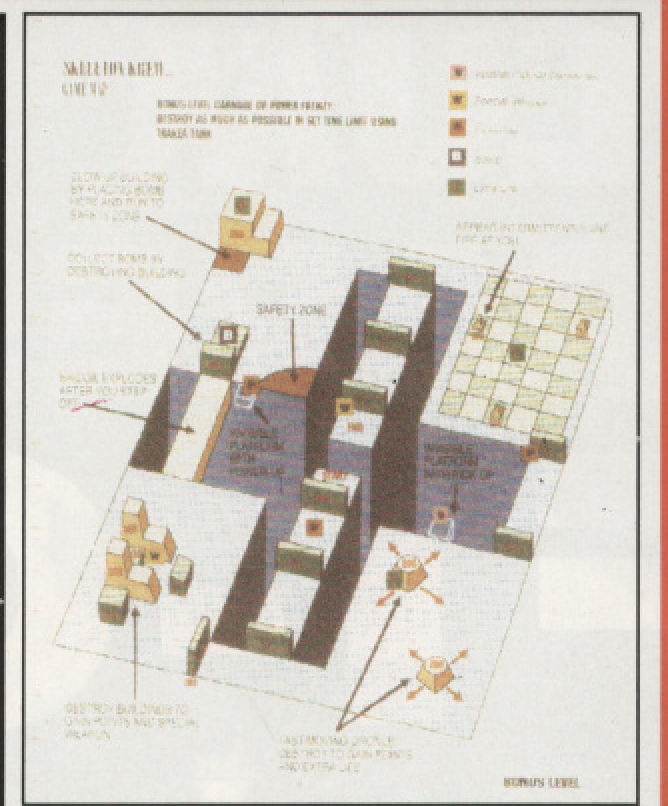


(Above) This will be one of the big end-of-level nasties - a Psykogenix Attack Chopper. Note the metallic-organic look that's used throughout the game.



(Above) Here are Joint and, er, Joint at the start of Level 1. Joint is the only Krew member fully finished so far, which is why you're seeing a lot of him.

(Above) Some animation frames for Joint's torso. The player sprites have more animation frames than the baddies as they're what you look at most.



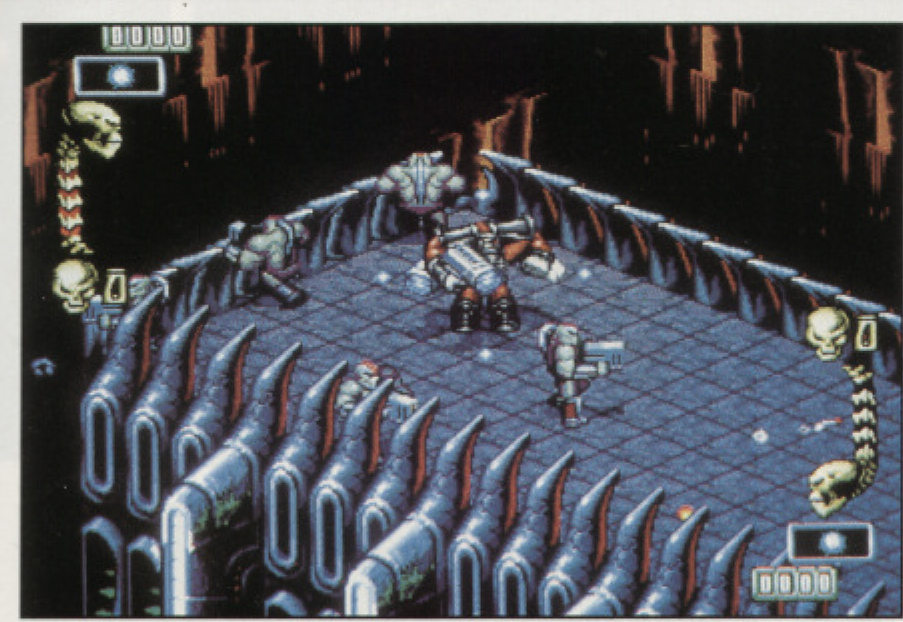
(Left and above) Before actual coding and graphics design started, the team spent ages coming up with a detailed game design spec, which included full maps of each level as shown here.



(Above) Take extra care on this moving walkway.



(Above) The Joint Synchronised Killing Team go through their paces.



(Above) The overlaid score bars took some clever technical trickery to achieve, but it was all worth it for the resulting 'arcade' look.

Doesn't he find it all a bit daunting? "I did at first," he replies nonchalantly, "but I did some work for Core before helping to finish off Blastar, so I know all about what's coming up - the deadlines, the late nights, lots of coffee and Coke..."

Oh, tell me about it, Jason, tell me about it. I was in the office till twelve last night. And the night before. And the night before that...

Anyway, enough of my whining. Time to move on (and across the room) to Heather Gibson, James's fellow graphic artist and also an ex-Rare employee. This is her first Amiga project and it seems she's finding it an extremely enjoyable experience.

"I was at Rare for about four years, doing stuff for the NES," says Heather. "In the early days we used to draw everything on gridded paper, which was then converted into binary and fed into the game. You only had a sixteen-colour palette to work with, so you can imagine I was in heaven when I came onto the Amiga and had all these extra colours."

Typically, Heather and James will work on different game graphics, with James drawing for the Mega Drive and Heather for the Amiga. Once finished, they then 'swap' the work they've done and Heather will then enhance James's graphics to take advantage of the Amiga's greater palette and James will downgrade Heather's graphics to the 16-colour limitations of the Megadrive. "All the sketches that James has done are really useful," comments Heather, "because you then know exactly what he's looking for from the graphics."

Heather is concentrating predominantly on designing background graphics. "I'm letting James get on with the character design," she says, "because he drew the original illustrations and so he knows exactly what he wants from the sprites."

As in most games the backgrounds are built up from a set of graphic 'blocks'. Unusually, however, Heather doesn't design each block individually. Instead, she sets up a template using some plain blocks and then draws complete screens showing, say, a section of wall. The blocks are then 'cut out' of the image on-screen. This way the blocks blend together better and that familiar 'jigsaw' look you get in many game backdrops is avoided.

Like James, Heather didn't find the isometric viewpoint that difficult to get her head around. "It's tricky to begin with," she says. "But once you get the ground rules laid down it becomes much easier.

One of the main headaches for Heather and James - and Jason too - is that you can't save effort and memory by horizontally 'flipping' sprites or background blocks, something which is common in most 2D games so that a character facing left can also double as a character facing right. "You think that something with look alright flipped," comments Heather," but then when you try it you find it just looks all wrong because it's isometric."

Thus every animation frame for every possible movement direction of each character has had to be drawn individually by hand. For this reason only the Krew characters will have the full complement of animation frames and eight-way movement, as they're the sprites you spend most time looking at, while the Psykogenix nasties will be cut down slightly.

It's hard to believe the team have only been working on Skeleton Krew for just over four months, as it already looks brilliant. And with four months work still to go it can only get better. In fact, I'll go so far as to wager that Skeleton Krew will go down in the shoot-'em-up history books. Look out Stone and Johnson - the Krew are coming through.

ASYLUM PREPARES FOR LIFT-OFF

It's choppers at the ready down in Bath (look, I had to get the 'gag' in somewhere) where Binary Asylum is finally ready to unveil its new 3D blaster to a salivating David Upchurch...

PROJECT: Zeewolf
PUBLISHER: Binary Asylum
DEVELOPER: In-house: Andy Wilton & Jim Gardner (programming).
INITIATED: Early 1993
RELEASE: Easter 1994

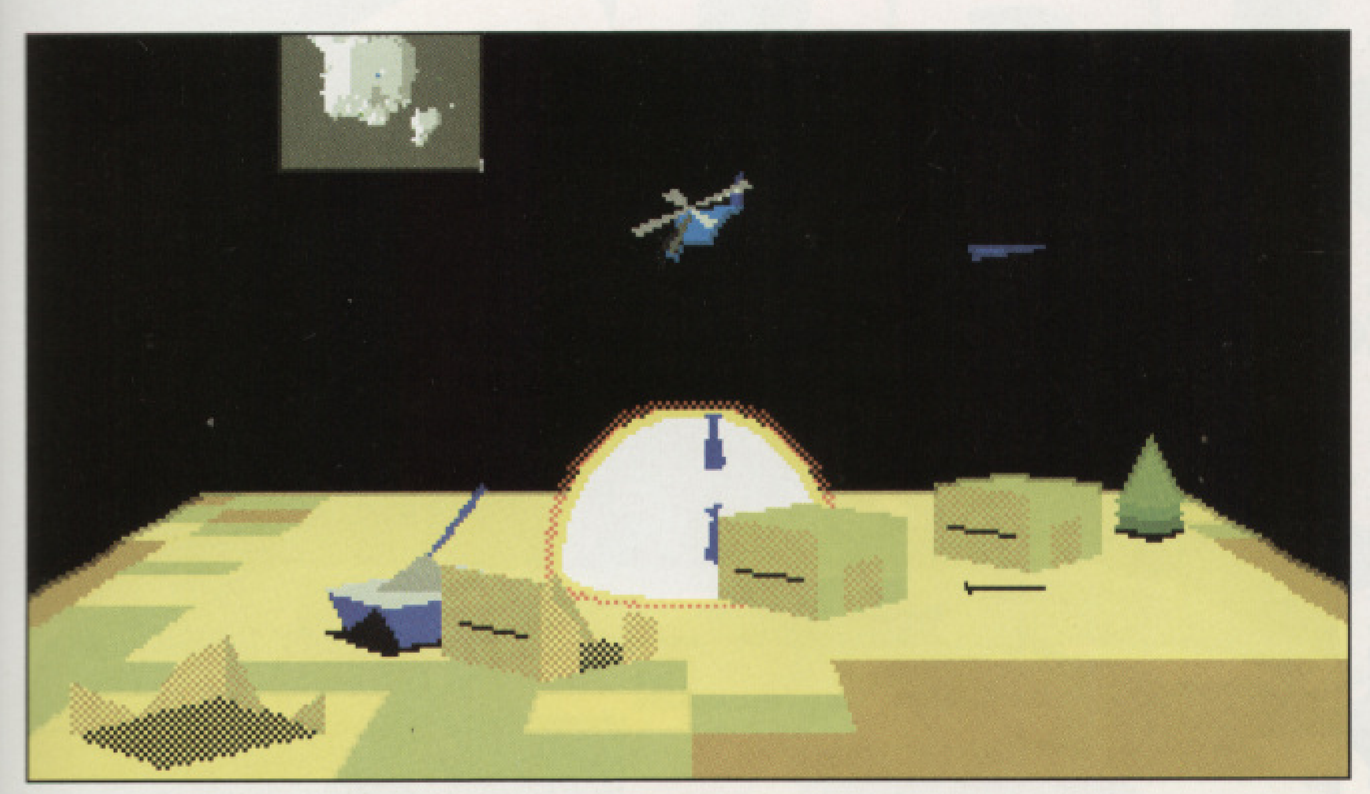
It's a worried Andy Smith who greets me when I arrive at Binary Asylum's Bath headquarters. Apparently a friend of his reckons he looks like the late Charles Haughtrey, mincing star of the Carry On films, which is a serious blow to any man's ego. After a few minutes of reassurance from me and a couple of cups of coffee, Andy feels fit enough to carry on (no pun intended - well alright, just a small one) and at long last he shows me their debut game, Zeewolf...

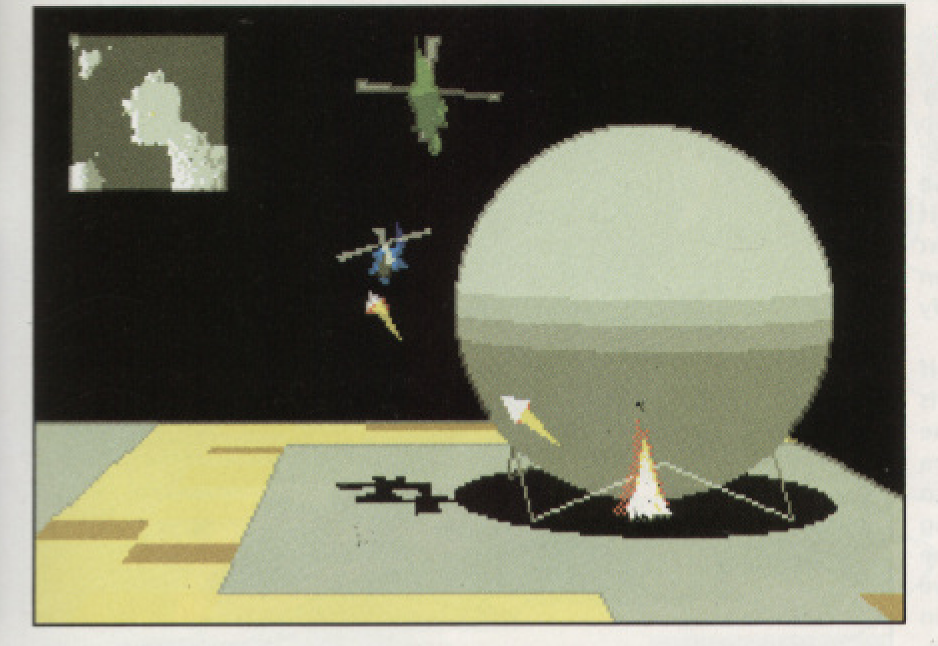
Regular readers may recall that I chatted to a tight-lipped, some might say secretive, Binary Asylum in a One On One back in June. The company was formed last March by a trio of ex-games journos, and since then the team's grown in size to a throbbing four full-time members of staff. As well as Bob Wade (da boss), the aforementioned Andy Smith (PR and marketing) and Andy Wilton (programming) there's a new boy in town - Jim Gardner, an ex-MicroProse coder.





(Main picture) Zeewolf is full of really neat effects, like the way that shooting at the sea causes a spout of water to fly into the air.
(Above) Your helicopter can carry a wide range of weapons, including bombs as demonstrated here.





> "The reactor was a complete b'stard! The maths involved... I mean, I did A-Level Further Maths and I did a year of maths at Cambridge but I'd hadn't ever done maths like that!"
>
> **Andy Wilton, Zeewolf's programmer.**



(Above) The Binary Asylum team, namely (from left to right) Bob Wade, Charles Haugh... er, Andy Smith, Andy Wilton and Jim Gardner.
(Above middle) Your chopper attacks the reactor, one of the impressive 'boss' objects. It's all done using 'curved surface technology'. Apparently.

And those aren't the only changes. For a start the company has undergone a title change (it was originally called just Asylum), its game has finally been given a name (Zeewolf - duh!) and, perhaps most importantly, Zeewolf has finally reached a stage where the team feel it's ready to show to the ever-hungry wolves from the press.

At the time of the One On One all the Binary Asylum boys would tell me about their first release was that it would be based around 3D polygons. And, as you can see from the screenshots in this feature, they weren't lying. Zeewolf is, if I wanted to pigeon-hole it, a very playable blend of Virus, Desert Strike and Thrust.

Although the precise structure of the game has yet to be decided - most of the time so far has been spent on perfecting the 3D engine - it seems likely that it'll stay pretty much as you see it now, that's to say a helicopter-based blaster, with you in control of a lone chopper gliding over enemy territory in an attempt to complete a series of do-or-die missions.

"It's a thinking man's shoot-'em-up, really," says Andy. "We want to leave a lot of the game decisions up to the player. It's going to be structured, obviously, but it's not going to so linear as a 'normal' shoot-'em-up."

What this translates into in game terms is the player has a lot of freedom to travel wherever he pleases and try any tactics he desires in an attempt to achieve the mission objectives. There's also some thought needed on how to achieve those objectives with the payload and fuel limitations your chopper has. After all, there's nothing worse than running out of Hellfires when you're just about to torch the enemy HQ or the juice drying up a couple of kilometres from home is there?

So say you have to destroy a heavily-protected enemy bunker. If you're a gung-ho type you can go in all cannons blazing. More thoughtful sorts, however, may decide to airlift 'friendly' tanks into the warzone (which is where the Thrust-style gameplay comes into things) so that they can deal with the defences while you nip in and take out the main target. It's up to you.

"The original idea was that you would have different craft - tanks, planes and things - to control," comments Andy, "and while we haven't ruled that out yet we think it's likely we'll stick with the helicopter."

Helicopters seems to be 'in vogue' at the moment. Ever since Desert Strike there's been a horde of chopper-based blasts released including Gunship 2000 and most recently Seek & Destroy. Why did Binary Asylum decide to base their game around a chopper too?

"I think it's because we all think helicopters are fab," smiles Andy. "And also the control method we have lends itself so well to a helicopter - with a plane it just wouldn't feel as natural or realistic."

As you can see from the screenshots, Zeewolf uses an impressive 3D landscaping technique to depict the action. Basically, your chopper stays locked to the centre of the screen, and the landscape rolls underneath as you fly around. Anyone who remembers Virus, David Braben's pre-Frontier classic, will know roughly what to expect.

What they won't expect, however, is the sheer speed of the damn thing. It's nippy on an A500, but unbelievable on an A1200. In fact, it was running so fast that Andy Wilton, Zeewolf's programmer affectionately known by the team as Wilts, had to tether the screen update to 17 frames per sec-

ond - any more and it became unplayable.

The amazing thing is this speed has been achieved on a 32-colour screen, whereas most 3D polygon games cut the palette down to 16 (for reasons we'll come to later). These extra colours have allowed for some subtle but neat effects, like the extra band of colour between each differently shaded 'patch' on the landscape to smooth out the transition.

"I wanted to get a soft-look landscape," says Wilts. "But it's not possible to do proper anti-aliasing or Gouraud shading on the A500 because of the speed and palette restrictions. However, to my eye anyway, this achieves some of my objectives, in that it looks less like a load of polygons and more like a smooth landscape."

But why go for this style of 3D perspective? "Well, I enjoyed Virus a lot," says Wilts. "And it's the game that started me out on the idea of using this perspective. Basically, I wanted to write a 3D game and I didn't have any leanings one way or another as to how it looked. But as a test of how fast my 3D routines were, I decided to do a patchwork landscape like Virus's.

"Basically it was going to be a demo in the same way that Lander [Braben's 'test run' for Virus on the Archimedes] was a demo. But having got the thing up and running I thought 'Why not make a game out of this?'"

Unlike Virus, which boasted massive mountain ranges, Zeewolf's landscape is far more restrained, undulating gently but effectively beneath the player's chopper as it zooms about.

"The game is designed so that the landscape never rises above a certain point," says Wilts. "In Virus David Braben went about it in a very different way - he actually depth-sorted the entire landscape [i.e. he calculated whether an object in the background is obscured by a hill in the foreground], which is very impressive in programming terms. The trouble is, it's useless as far as gameplay is concerned."

"The last thing you want is to be whizzing along and then go wham into a mountainside," chips in Andy. "The gameplay is everything. It's all very well being clever and impressing your peers, but most games-players aren't programming peers and all they want to do is play a good game. Everything's in the game for a reason. There's nothing there purely to 'show off'."

I comment that it's surprising that more people haven't built more games around this type of view. Apart from Virus and Conqueror, I can't think of any. Why is this, does Wilts think?

"Well, it's because it's extremely hard to do a game like this and keep it running at an acceptable speed" he replies. "A typical view will have around 200 polygons in it, and if you're going to get that moving at any sort of decent speed on an A500, even in 16 colours, it's bloody difficult."

And, of course, getting Zeewolf running at this speed in 32 colours is harder still. It's not just because the processor and blitter having an extra bit-plane to deal with, it's also because this extra memory shifting 'clogs' the Amiga's system, with the result that the CPU and blitter have to fight to access data, resulting in the loss of further valuable processing time.

How Wilts has got around this is very clever. You see, it's actually only the patchwork landscape and the objects on it that are displayed in the full 32-colour palette, with the sky-borne objects being restricted to 16. As the landscape only rises about halfway up the screen at most and there's also an unused portion of the screen left at the bottom of the screen to make the game compatible with American NTSC TVs, Wilts has been able to 'time' the blitter and CPU functions according to what and how much is being written to the screen so that they rarely clash - with amazing results.

Of course, this glib little layman's explanation of the process makes it sound quite simple but, believe me (or rather, believe Wilts), it's not. But this was nothing compared to some of the problems Wilts had with what he calls 'boss objects' - big muthas that, as you approach, loom out of the blackness at you from the sides of what Wilts calls the 'view volume', i.e. the area of landscape currently on-screen.

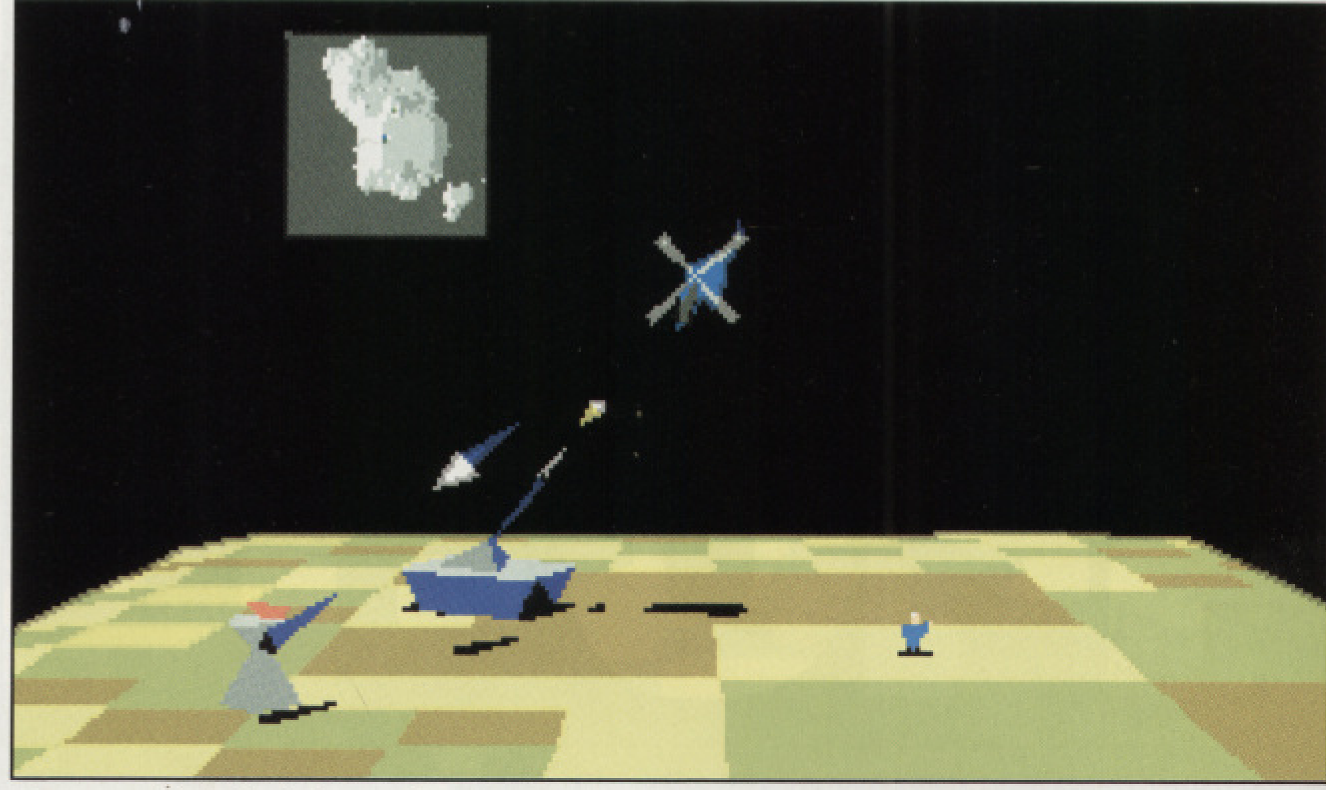
"I always loved the way that, in the early days of boss monsters, when they came on-screen you'd go 'Wooooow!'" he says. "And I wanted to bring some of that sensation into Zeewolf. So I did a lot of work on getting objects bigger than the 'view volume' and having them so that, rather than just suddenly appearing, they'd glide into view."

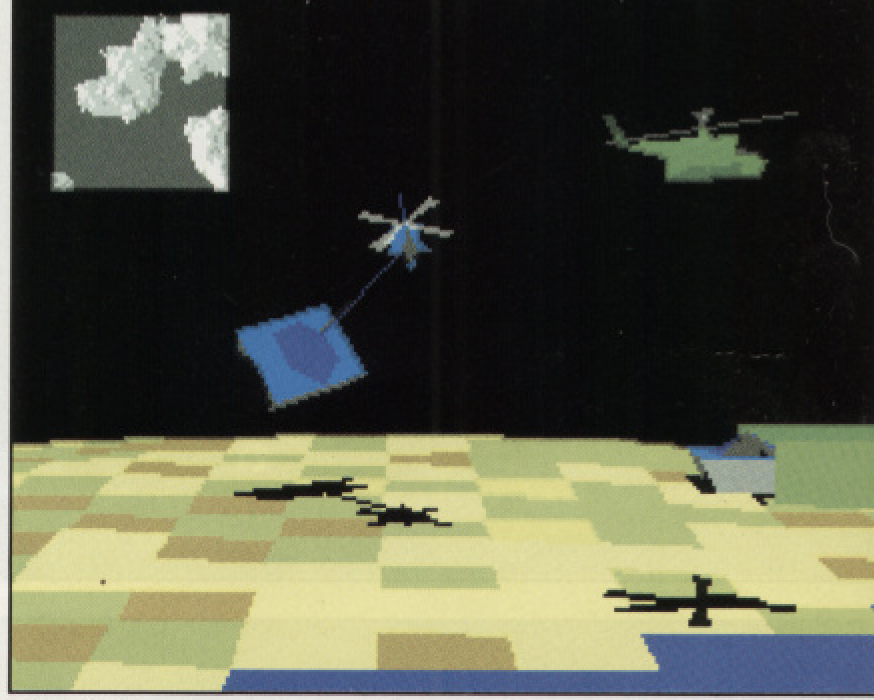
This didn't prove too tough for regular-shaped 'bosses' like the battleship, but the spherical nuclear reactor was a different story altogether... "The reactor was a complete b'stard!" laughs Wilts. "The maths involved... I mean, I did A-Level Further Maths and I did a year of maths at Cambridge but I'd hadn't ever done maths like that!"

As mentioned earlier, a lot of Zeewolf's features are subject to change over the final months leading up to the game's release. What seems fairly certain, though, is that it's going to be a bit of a corker, especially given the team's enthusiasm and their obvious desire to create a game that's as impressive to play as it is to look at. And being ex-games mag journos, they know what makes a good game.

"The key to the whole thing is the gameplay," says Andy.

Too true, and it's a pity more software houses don't realise that fact.

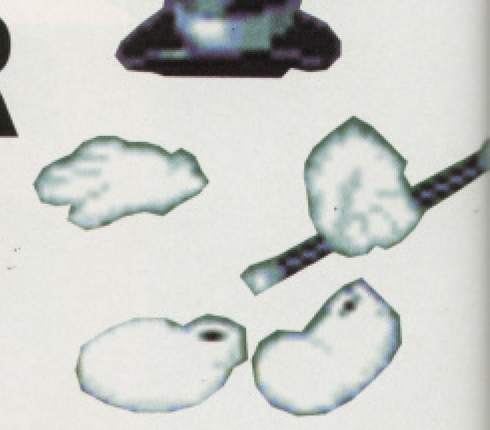




(Above) When transporting supplies or, in this case, a tank, the game takes on a more 'Thrust'-like feel, with the tank's extra mass affecting your chopper's handling.
(Top) Looks like that little bloke's wandered into the war zone by mistake.


BUBBA 'N' STIX
Our goofy hero and his friend - an intelligent alien stick - have crash landed on a weird planet after being captured by an alien spacecraft. In order to get back to Earth, Bubba must use his stick in a variety of different ways to solve puzzles, overcome adversaries and foil the comedic attempts of his kidnapper to recapture him in this horizontally scrolling puzzle.
Available on Amiga (1 meg only)
Screen shots taken from Amiga version
CORE DESIGN LIMITED
Core Design Limited, Tradewinds House, 69-71A Ashbourne Road, Derby DE22 3FS. Tel: (0332) 297797 Fax: (0332) 381511

ANYONE FOR MAGIC?



PROJECT: Magician's Castle
PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
DEVELOPER: Miracle Games: Graeme Ashton (managing director); Ian Jenkins (sales and marketing director); Jezz (graphics); Rob (data entry and game design); Steve (programming).
INITIATED: January 1993
RELEASE: April 1994

Matt Broughton saws women in half and pulls rabbits out of his trousers for all the wrong reasons, as he takes a look at Psygnosis' forthcoming adventure/puzzle game.



(Above) You're not always on your own in Magician's Castle, and though I'm being hounded by these rather persistant 'marble things' I'm sure that rabbit would be my mate if only I could get that carrot down. Don't get the impression that these are 'Give object A to character B' Dizzy-style puzzles, because it's more interesting than that. Honset.



(Left) Here they are, the ruthless band of merciless programers and such that make up Miracle Games. The guilty are, from left to right: Ian (sales and marketing director), Steve (programming), Rob (data entry and game design) and Jezz (graphics). I'm reliably informed that Phil (front bottom - chortle) isn't involved with Magician's Castle, but is a jolly decent chap none-the-less and a bit of a photot-genic sort. Well done everyone!

Casting my mind back to the days of my childhood, there seems to be a disturbingly high frequency of memories that involve my sister Penny beating me up. She may only be three years older than me, but when you're only six years old that translates into about five inches of extra height and several kilos of highly advantageous weight.

A great favourite of hers, as I recall, was all-in wrestling, where not only was she one of the competitors but also the acting referee. This, as the more vicious of you might realise, is a very strong position to be in, because not only can you shorten the length of the rounds when you're losing but you can also lengthen them when you're winning.

Needless to say, rounds could last as long as 35 minutes if I was having my face burnt on the front room carpet, while they'd last a scant minute if I was lucky enough, by some fluke of nature, to take the advantage. Well, that may all sound fairly nasty (and it was) but, believe me, it's nothing compared to the in-family rows that take place in Psygnosis' forthcoming release - Magician's Castle.

Two brother magicians, each inherently jealous of the other's skills, are at war. Brother A has cast a spell over brother B, who is now a prisoner in his own castle, drained of all magical abilities. Fortunately, before his powers left him, he was able to activate his hat, gloves, shoes and cane into a magical assistant that must now negotiate the 100 levels of the castle, avoiding the traps and solving the puzzles left by Brother A. Only once the assistant escapes will the castle's true master be free. This is where the player steps in, taking control of the bodiless hero, as he attempts to break free from the castle.

The plot is strange indeed, and who better to answer to it than the MD of Miracle Games, Graeme Ashton? "The original concept came from Richard Brown from Psygnosis," he says. "He had this script drawn up which was quite good and basically described the magician as he is - with only the gloves and hat and no body - and exactly what the scenario was. We all looked it over and thought 'Yes, we can make a good game out of this'. He had quite a few ideas which we subsequently changed to make a bit more



(Left) 'Interesting and strange graphics R us'. Well, they said that the graphics were cartoon based, but I wasn't really ready for this! Straight out of a Scooby Doo episode, this chair was obviously a horse in previous lives, and only just avoided it in this one. Mind you, it does offer the only safe way across these termite things, so be nice to it.

(Right) A good illustration of the sort of thing to expect when you start the game is this seemingly impassable pit of spikes. I say seemingly, because pull a few levers, collect a few potions, and - hey, hey - you have one instant magical travel disk thing. These disks will often fade in and out, calling for a touch of platform skills in timing jumps.



practical, but it's really an amalgamation of what we all wanted."

A year on and the game's concept remains much as it was originally, reckons Graeme. "Richard's idea was that it would be an adventure, not an arcade game - that was a big no-no from the very beginning. We did actually introduce a bit of firing nasty spells and things, but then dropped that because it started to move away from the basic concept.

"The basic idea we started off with went along the lines of that all good games have atmosphere, humour and are amusing for anyone watching the game being played." At this point I mention the section of the game that includes a friendly rabbit being squashed by a falling treasure chest. This sort of amusing I ask...? "Well, yeah. From a third party's point of view, if someone's watching you, they should be able to look on and say 'Crikey, that's good' and it's got to have gameplay that hooks you at every level, which a lot of games just don't have.

"They give you a big start, but then they just bang each level out and, you know, it just doesn't work. On Magician's Castle every little puzzle, every room has had a lot of thought go into it, and then it's been tried and tested again and again to check exactly how it works."

"People who make cartoons have been making them for so long that they've really perfected the ways of injecting suspense and how to get you on the edge of your seats, so that's where we looked for inspiration."
Graeme Ashton, Miracle's MD.

Miracle originally worked on the idea of having an inventory, but then realised that that would involve creating text descriptions for everything, thus loosing the 'Wonder what this does?' element.

"We thought about letting the player pick things up and carry them around, but it led to descriptions like 'A potion that burns barrels' or something stupid which just didn't work. Then Richard came up with the idea of cutting to a scene showing what you've done, and now we've got it so that you get a 'Meanwhile...' on the screen, while the scene shifts to the room that your actions have affected."

The graphics were very much based on established cartoon styles and, with the main character in particular, Disney - not something that was easy to create on a machine where you can only get so many frames of animation.

"One of the sad things is that Jezz [the graphic artist] actually drew tons of animation frames for all the different bad guys doing different things, and some of them were absolutely phenomenal - they just blew you away - but we couldn't put them in because they wouldn't fit. There are bits in the Amiga game where something happens in about three frames, whereas on the PC we've got sixteen frames going for the same thing - it's just not quite the same."

Finding the space to fit it all in remained the team's main problem throughout the project's development due to the graphic technique employed. A each room is held individually in memory, it means that as you travel from room to room, the data has to be loaded in from disk - something that doesn't seem to have affected the game's speed. How?

"What we did in the end was to say, right, this has got to work on 1Mb machines minimum, but if the machine has more memory, we put a massive disk cache on it, so when you go into a room it stores all that information into the cache for when you go back. If you're playing it on an A1200, it can remember 1.5 or two disks worth of data; which is useful to the point where it would've been a nightmare otherwise."

At the time of writing, the music is proving to be the problem that it always is, with developers always seeming to leave that and the sound effects until last.

"We did have something like 100K spare for any sound effects and music, but that just keeps getting smaller and smaller. I originally gave Psygnosis a list of about 100 sound effects that the guys had put together, but then we sat down and realised that we'd never get them all in. It then boiled down to having to go with not such good music and sound effects, or dropping the bassline (NO!) which is something a lot of people do to allow sound effects in, but is something I really hate.

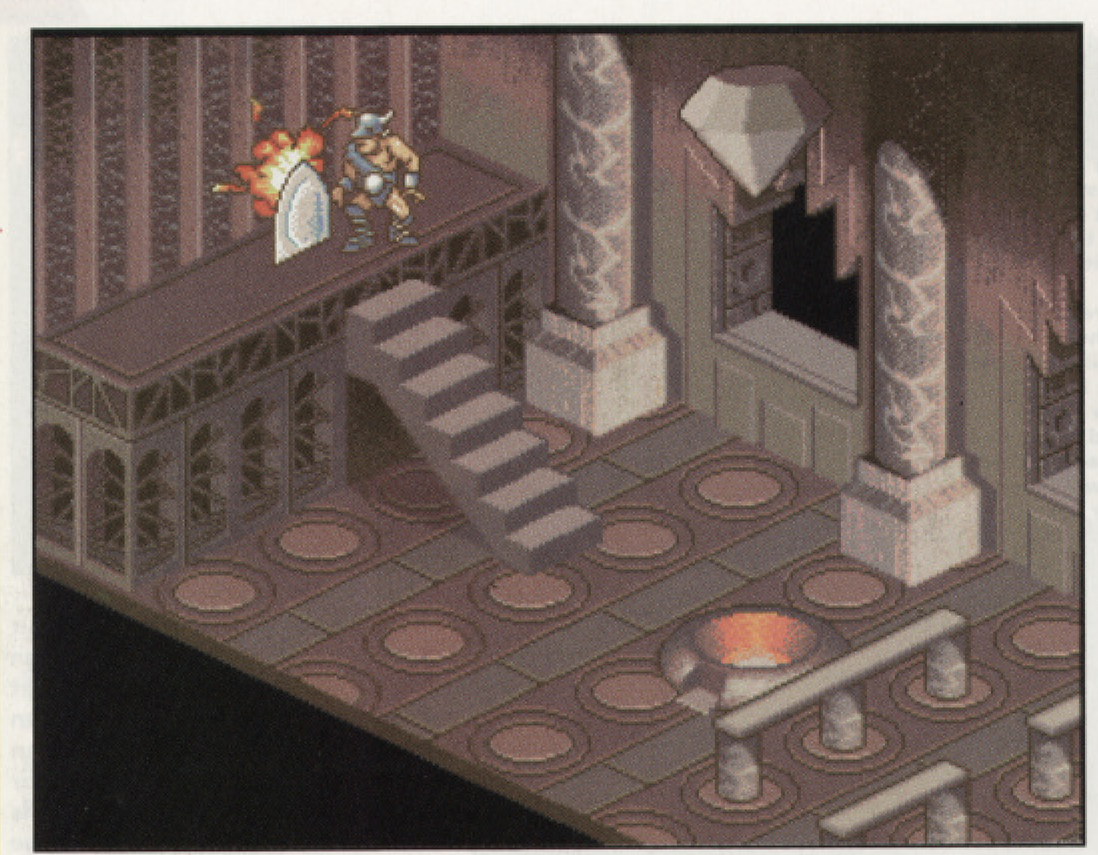
"In the end I came up with the idea that when you enter a room where something bad is going to happen, the music drops off and you get a dramatic chord 'Dan-dan-daarrr', rather like in a cartoon, with the general music dropping back in again after. The thing is that people who make cartoons have been making them for so long that they've really perfected the ways of injecting suspense and how to get you on the edge of your seats, so that's where we looked for inspiration."

"At the end of the day, the graphics and sounds have to come together to create a game that's like, though I'm somewhat loathed to say it, Mario, a game where you hate it but you just keep playing. Only, we want to people to love it and keep playing it. That's not asking too much is it?"

No, I suppose not.



Well, my frendly rabbit (who answers to the name 'Stew') is with me, but I don't think either of us are going to get much further without a bit of 'Gods' inspired button pressing and lever pulling. The game is quite nicely mapped so that, although you have to keep travelling from location to location, the puzzle solution 'elements' are never so separated that you get bored trundling back and forth.





(Above) "This is the judement room," clarifies Jerr. "Here, Heimdall will march to the centre of the room and most of the screen will switch to halfbrite mode, apart from a beam of light picking out our hero. Then the judge will inform Heimdall how well he's getting on in the game."

(Left) "We're experimenting with the way Heimdall moves around," states Ged. "He started off being able to move in eight directions, but for the time being we've restricted it to four. I'm not sure how the final game will turn out, but we can half the number of Heimdall sprites we need by only enabling him to move in four directions, meaning that we'd be able to do other things with the spare memory."

VIKING

Simon Byron wipes the tears from his eyes as he takes a last look at Heimdall 2. It's a sad day for The One, this.

You really don't appreciate what we do to obtain the red-hot exclusives we always manage to tie-up especially for your perusal, and this particular Work In Progress is no different. It's caused me no end of abuse, I can tell you. I was sat on the train on my way up to Sheffield, hometown of Heimdall 2's creators, when this kindly youth who I've never met before barged past me, almost spilling my coffee. When I mumbled something under my breath, he made some derogatory statement concerning the number of fathers I have whilst performing the weird 'two-fingers' dance popular with angry young men. Unfortunately, he got his facts wrong: I do have a dad. I wonder who he thought I was?

Fortunately, the atmosphere was far more benevolent up at jovial Jerr's house, which is no doubt due to the state of Heimdall 2. It's coming together in leaps and bounds - a real testament to the work the trio are putting in.



(Above) "You create games in 'layers'," explains Ged. "You go through it once and sort out the backgrounds, again to sort out the adventure's key locations, a third time to fill it out, and all the tweaking is done during the fourth time."

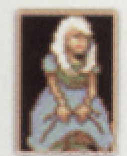
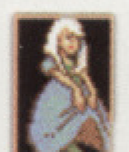
However, had we paid a visit a week ago we would have found a very different story. From the sound of things, Ged was prepared to top himself, such was the tedious nature of the work he had to do.

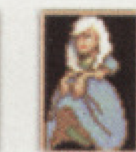
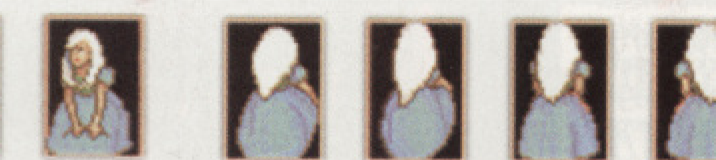
"I had to sit down and draw all the collision lines," he moans, "which was a real bore. Each room has got information contained within it so

Here's a sneak preview at the box artwork for Heimdall 2. Obviously this is a very early peak - Jerr hopes to colour it in if he manages to find his crayons - but we thought you'd be interested.





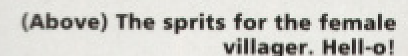



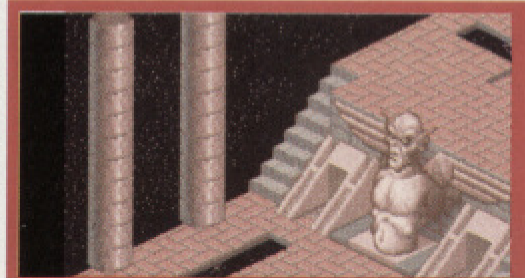








(Above) The sprits for the female villager. Hell-o!





(Right)The team haven't finished the last level, so for the time being you'll have to look at a couple of backdrops. Who knows - the final version may well look completely different to this, but that's the whole point of these Work In Progresses, isn't it?

PROJECT: Heimdall 2

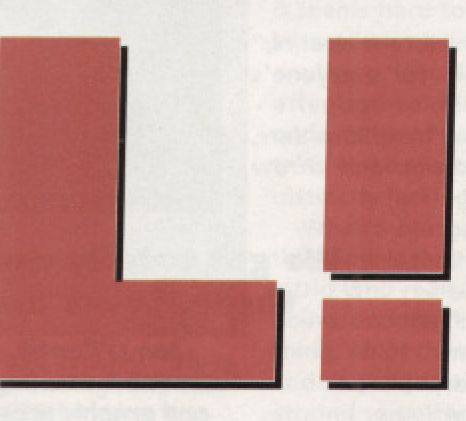
PUBLISHER: Core Design

DEVELOPER: The 8th Day: Ged Keaveney (programming); Jerr O'Carroll (graphics); Dave Keogh (additional game design); Martin Iveson (music).

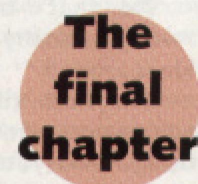
INITIATED: April 1993

RELEASE: Easter 1994





HELL!



The final chapter

that the program knows exactly where you are and what you can do, and it's these collision lines which prevent you from being able to walk through walls. It's a severe drag doing these - there are 104 rooms in total so you can imagine how much work is involved." Let's pause and imagine, shall we? Right...

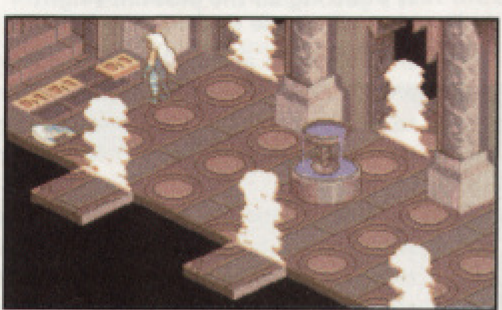
"Then I had to finish off the 'walk behind' system," continues Ged, "and input all the points where Heimdall can jump off platforms onto the level below. It's all this data which forms the basic backbones of the game."

"So all the backgrounds are in now..." adds Jerr.

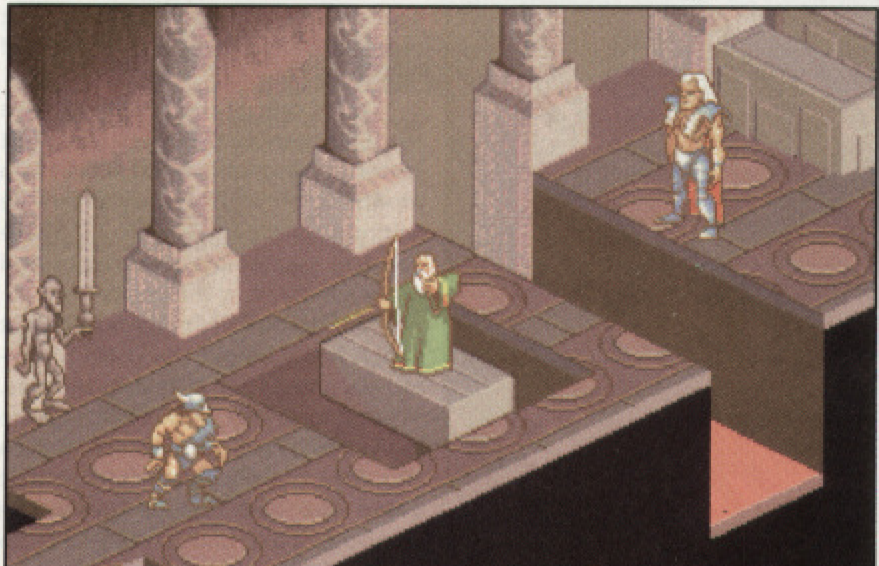
"...Which is a really big step forward," continues Ged, only to be interrupted once more by his artistic colleague.

"As far as the room-specific graphics and animations go, I've only got one and a bit levels left to complete," states Jerr, "which thankfully doesn't amount to that much."

"What we've found is that the first bit of the game tends to be the best because you're more enthusiastic and you put more time and effort into everything," says Ged. "But having to input a large amount of data soon becomes depressing.



(Left) The bright things you can see prevent Heimdall or Ursha from travelling through the doors if the puzzle beyond has already been completed. Solve all eight (three are off-screen) and you'll be able to go through the door Ursha's gazing at. For your information, this location is known to Ged, Jerr and Dave as 'Room 69'. Interesting, eh?



"One thing we were talking about today," confesses Jerr, "was what would happen if someone decided to throw a piece of bread at an opponent instead of fighting him. You need to anticipate player actions like that just in case someone, somewhere does try it. In the end we decided that it would damage the opponent, but only very, very slightly, so that's how we've made it."

We were thinking of hiring someone just to type the information for the collision lines in - that's how frustrated with it all we got."

Phew-ee! Luckily, that thankless task now over, Jerr and Ged have returned to their normal selves and continue to point out Heimdall 2's improvements over its predecessor (which, as you may have gathered, they now consider 'crap').

The most noticeable addition are the puzzles. There are loads of the blighters, and each has had a great deal of thought put into it so that it's logical, taxing and ultimately rewarding.

In one room, a circle of spikes surrounds an object. These spikes rotate giving you only one opportunity to enter the circle and collect the item. But that's not all, as Ged explains: "It's basically a reaction tester. The spikes rotate fairly slowly at first so reaching the object contained within the ring is fairly easy. But once the player has collected the first item, another, more desirable one will appear and the speed the spikes turn will increase. This will continue with more and more valuable objects appearing until the player can no longer get in and out without sustaining damage."

At one stage in the game, Heimdall has to bypass a number of giant oscillating balls which block his path. It looks pretty impressive and, as Ged explains, was quite difficult to get working satisfactorily.

"The way you animate objects like these is by using mathematical functions like sine and cosine. Understanding and implementing these is a real bummer. The balls are actually just animations which repeat themselves, speeding up and slowing down as specified by a couple of programming routines. One routine controls the speed while another controls the actual movement.

"Whenever a ball reaches the bottom of its cycle, the program activates an invisible damage box on the floor. If Heimdall's position corresponds with the co-ordinates of an active damage box then he's obviously been struck by the ball and health points are deducted from his overall total accordingly."

So how does the team dream up these puzzles?

"We usually drink lots of alcohol," jokes Ged, much to everyone's amusement.

"No, that's true," explains Jerr, "we get totally drunk and throw ideas around."

> **"We get totally drunk and throw ideas around."**
>
> **Jerr O'Carroll, Heimdall 2 co-designer and graphic artist.**

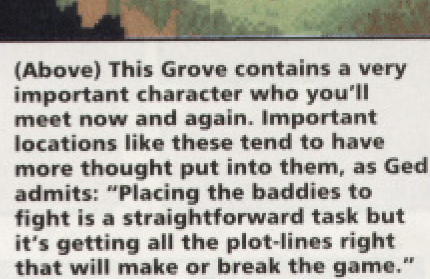
"The first thing you do on a game is design and you've got to do as much as possible from the start," reckons Ged. "But your initial spec will hardly bear any resemblance to how the game ends up."

"We're still changing things now," admits Jerr, "and we're only a month or so away from completion. The spikes puzzle was thought up this morning and it's in now. Originally, you were going to enter the room and discover an object on the wall. But when you crossed a certain point, the spikes were going to come up and trap you so that you couldn't escape. There'd be an object on the wall which you'd presume had to be shot with an arrow, but doing that would only harm you. The solution to the original puzzle was pretty obscure, which is why it has been replaced."

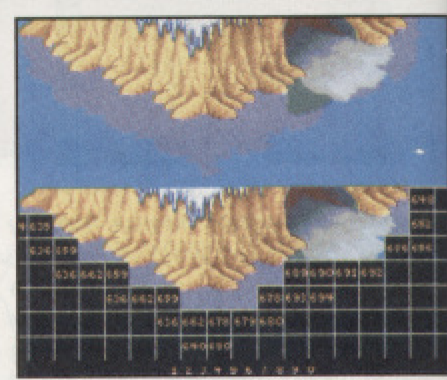
"When you sit down and do a whole session of designing, most of the puzzle ideas you come up with towards the end are pretty crap, to be honest," thinks Ged. "The best puzzles ideas tend to come out of the blue."

"That's one of the problems with the first game..." begins Jerr, but we're getting a bit fed up with him moaning on about how crap the original Heimdall was, so I'll spare you the rest of his comments and move on...

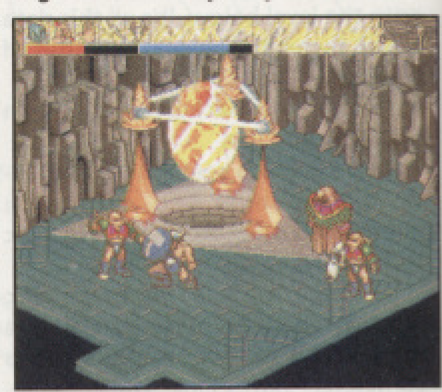
It's Heimdall 2's convoluted plot which has allowed the team to create such varied and taxing puzzles. "The actual plot behind this game has given us much more scope than the first," reckons Ged. "In that game you just had to locate the weapons Loki had stolen, but in Heimdall 2 he's being a lot more subtle and manipulating other people into causing havoc. There are plenty of twists as you progress through the quest so hopefully people will be genuinely surprised by what they dis-



(Above) This Grove contains a very important character who you'll meet now and again. Important locations like these tend to have more thought put into them, as Ged admits: "Placing the baddies to fight is a straightforward task but it's getting all the plot-lines right that will make or break the game."

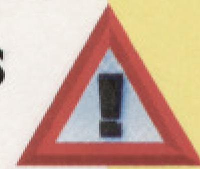


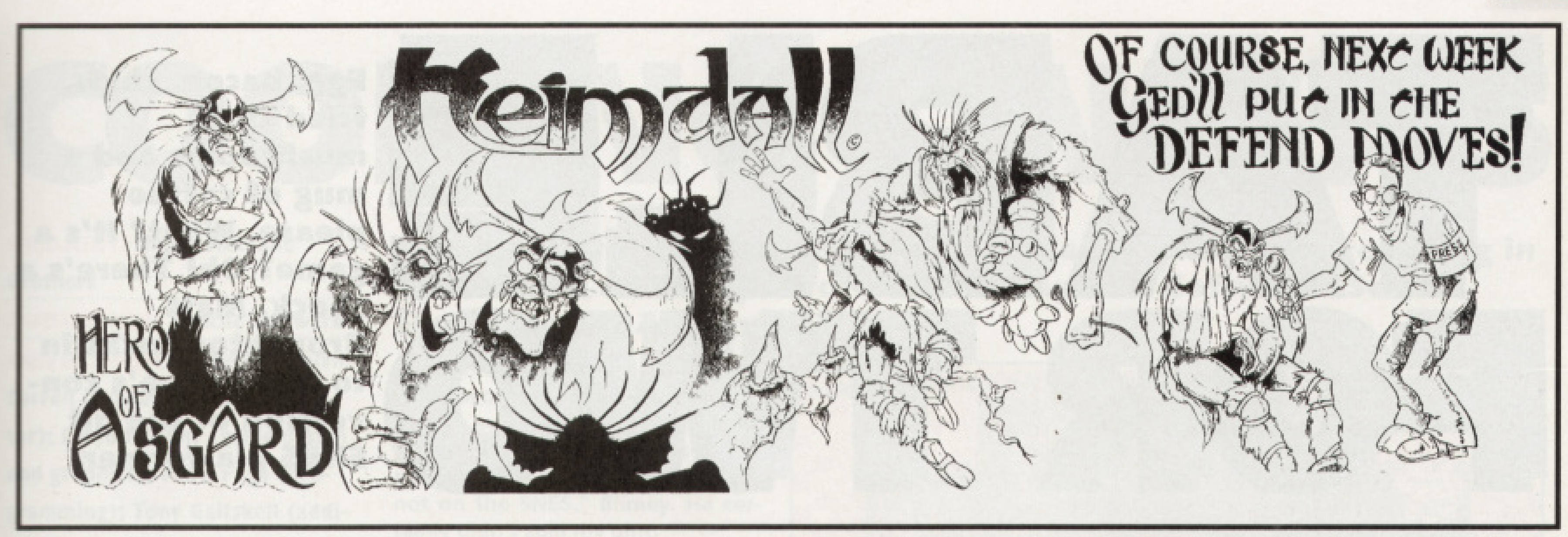
(Above) Jerr outlines how he informs Ged what blocks need to be animated: "These screens contain information specifying what blocks need to go where and which animation frames should overwrite the old ones. Doing it this way ensures there's no confusion and makes trying out ideas very easy indeed."



Heimdall will have his fair share of scuffles, the worst of which will come in the form of set-pieces like here. He's being attacked by two unpronounceable beings, as well as a druid, meaning that shield-work will play an important part of combat. But what's the significance of that big ball thing? Find out for yourselves in April...

"This is a light-related puzzle," explains Ged. "Depending on your attributes at the time, platforms will appear and disappear with increased regularity and you have to work out how to make it across without falling into the gap below. Most of our puzzles are quite hard to work out at first, but after a bit of thought the solutions become clear."





cover. That's what we're aiming for, anyway.

"For example, as you go about solving one problem you hear from some of the villagers that the King's son is missing. At that point it's an unrelated event but a little later you'll discover what's going on from a certain character who keeps popping up during the game. Most of the things that happen in the game are related. There are no handy coincidences in Heimdall 2. What we've tried to do is point the player in the right direction so they begin to understand exactly what's going on without having it spelled out."

"The importance of maintaining atmosphere is one thing I learned from my days as an animator," reveals Jerr. "One thing Don Bluth taught us..."

"...Oops," interjects Ged. "A slight clue as to which particular animation studio it was."

"Yes, one thing DON BLUTH taught me was that whenever you watch an impressive cartoon, it only takes one mistake to destroy the illusion of reality. Something like Aladdin is so consistent and realistic that it's hard to believe you're only watching an animation. We're aiming for the same levels of consistency and realism with Heimdall 2. Hopefully they'll be no continuity errors."

"Atmosphere is all important," reiterates Ged. "For example, if you're totally engrossed in the game, the last thing you want is an Amiga requester popping up midway through. That would just destroy everything."

Memory restrictions have meant that Jerr has had to reduce the amount of sprites the game contains: "Throughout the game you'll come across villagers who are going about their daily business, but because of memory restrictions we can only have two types of people; a boy and a girl. These sprites wander around the game and it's possible to interact with them to gain more clues. If we had more memory then we'd be able to dream up loads more superfluous people, but unfortunately we're held back by lack of memory."

Unfortunately, Jerr's under a lot of pressure to finish off Heimdall 2. Core aren't the culprits - it's his fiance! "I'm trying to get it finished as soon as possible before I sign my life away. The prospective missus has been giving me grief because she says I'm spending too much time on the game," he admits.



(Above) This map shows Midgard, a war-torn world, as Ged explains: "There are two villages who are at war but they've been tricked into fighting each other by Loki. Both villages think that the other is allied with Loki so it's your job to convince them otherwise. That's your main objective but there are obviously many puzzles to solve en route."



During his quest, Heimdall will have to perform acts of human kindness. Like here, for example. We all know how wrong and immoral slavery was, but the inhabitants of Heimdall's world haven't realised that just yet. So by freeing them from their captivity, you'll be rewarded with a fantastic weapon. Not bad, eh?



In this garden, Heimdall has to locate a movable block which he can then place in a gap elsewhere so that he's able to gain access to another part of the game world. The solution is all very straightforward and shouldn't cause too much of a problem. That's all I'm prepared to say - you don't think I'm going to spoil it for you, do you?

She's not going to have to wait too long, though, because the game's scheduled for completion within the next month. At this time it seems hard to imagine a scenario where Heimdall 2 will turn out to be anything less than excellent. The attention to detail, graphical style and wealth of puzzles it already contains make most modern quests look distinctly lacking.

What's blatantly obvious about the game is that it's being created by a trio who really enjoy what they're doing, and that's the most important thing. All of them are into Norse legend so programming a game based around something they're genuinely interested must seem more like a hobby than a job.

Core have pretty much left the team to get on with Heimdall 2 (every time I've seen the game, the Core spokesperson accompanying me has been as surprised as I to witness its progress), confident that Jerr, Ged and Dave will come up with the goods at the end of the day, which is a foregone conclusion as far as I'm concerned.

You may think that things can go wrong between now and the game's release, but let me just end with this: I haven't seen a more impressive game in development since I visited Revolution to see how they were getting on with Beneath A Steel Sky. And look how that turned out.

Believe me, Heimdall 2 is going to be B-I-G.

GET THIS!

In our ever-continuing policy to bring you the best demos possible, we'll be giving away a superb fully-playable demo of Heimdall 2 with the April issue. It'll be a complete level, not found in the finished game, and you'll be able to win some fantastic prizes by completing it. Are we good to you or what?

TABLE FOR TWO

Egg, bacon, chips, fried slice, mushrooms and a mug of coffee please. What? It's a game? Oh! There's a shock. Matt Broughton tucks in to Mindscape's conversion of the hit SNES platformer.

I'm a bit of a dab hand in the kitchen. No, really. You'd be amazed at the culinary delights I can conjure up from even the most basic of ingredients. Apart from the obvious sausage and egg or egg and sausage, you could expect such delicacies as 'Egg à la sausage' or even the famous 'Broughton's sausage dans l'oeuf'.

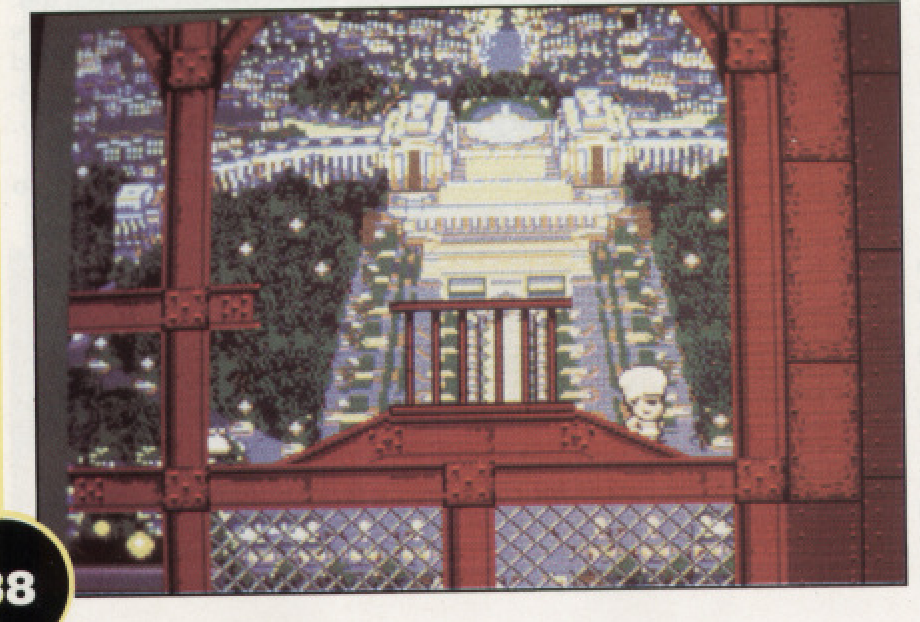
Of course, my kitchen doesn't feature numerous vegetables running around causing havoc, which is (in case you don't know a dodgy link when you see one) exactly what's happened to Pierre Le Chef in Mindscape's conversion of the SNES game Out To Lunch. (Nicely done - David.)

The plot revolves around the world renowned master Pierre Le Chef who, while on a world tour, has run into a bit of a problem: his ingredients aren't too happy about the thought of being blended, chopped and finely minced - and who would be? As a result, they've escaped and must now be recaptured by Pierre before he can move on to the next country in his tour.

By jumping on or flour bombing the naughty food, Pierre can stun the ingredients long enough to bag them and return them to his pantry. The only problem with this is that, meanwhile, he must avoid or destroy the diseases and insects which will infect or eat the food. Pierre is, of course, not without enemies himself, and must also deal with the evil fiend Le Chef Noir, who will make a general nuisance of himself by freeing captured veg and such like.

According to Mindscape, the game boasts "48 challenging levels spread across 6 countries, each with its own theme including specific foods and music to capture the flavour of each country" and we can, apparently, also expect to find "secret levels, unique power-ups and over 1000 frames of superb humorous character animations".

Well, we all now know about the game, but how well has the game survived the conversion process? Over to the Amiga version's coder - Paul Gaze: "The main problem we've encountered throughout the conversion is getting the parallax right and keeping the game running fast enough to maintain the original's playability. Originally we started on the A500, but found that it wasn't really all that good because it couldn't have a backdrop and it only worked at about 25 frames per second. We then went onto the A1200, and now it's working a lot better with eight-colour backgrounds, and fifty frames per second."



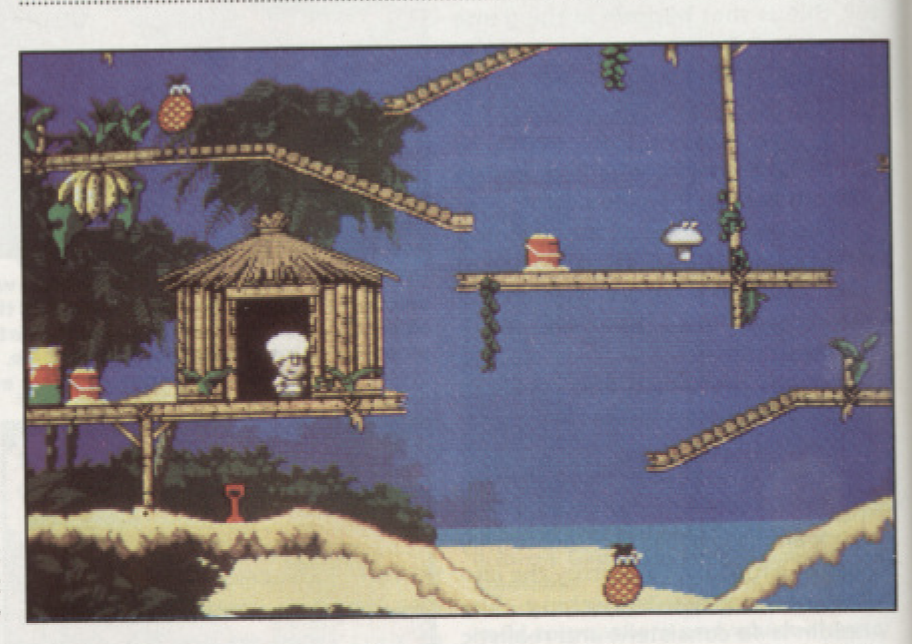
PROJECT: Out To Lunch

PUBLISHER: Mindscape

DEVELOPER: In-house: Paul Gaze (programming); Paul Stevens (graphics); Mark Knight (music and sound FX); Steve Leney (original concept).

INITIATED: September 1993

RELEASE: March 1994



This fact leaves the A500 sadly dangling its legs over the edge of the 'Cliff Of No Future' - so what of the other Amiga formats? "I'm not sure what will happen to the A500 version. Maybe we'll do it later - it all depends what people decide at the end, just purely because of the speed the game needs to run at. I think it will most probably appear on CD32 at some point, because if it works well on A1200 it'll work well on CD - along with the obvious improvements."

As far as travelling the 'SNES to Amiga' road goes, Out To Lunch has fared quite well, only losing out on colours; with the SNES's 64-colours cut down 40. Also, all the Amiga sprites are in 16 colours, as opposed to the 64 that the SNES supplies.

"In honesty, up close you can't really tell any difference. We used 3-bit planes for the background, and 5-bit for the foreground and the sprites. All the sprites are software sprites - they're not done using the actual hardware. It would've got a bit sticky if we'd used hardware sprites because you can only have eight on a line, and there's quite a lot of sprites in this."

The SNES game was only a 1Mb cartridge so the game should weigh in at just two disks, with the game's content identical to the original due to the team working to the original level maps. And Paul's favourite moment in the game?

"When you've done all the levels for a country, you go onto this thing called the trolley dash, where you rush through this supermarket and have to grab as many vegetables as you can - it's a lot of fun. People think of the silliest things for games don't, they?"

Yes, they certainly do!



COOKING ON GAS

PROJECT: Super Methane Brothers
PUBLISHER: Apache Software
DEVELOPER: In-house: Delvin Sorrell (executive project director); Lloyd Murphy (game design and graphics); Mark Page (programming); Tony Gaitskell (additional graphics); Matt 'Moustache' Owens (sonics); Debbie Sorrell (map design).
INITIATED: July 1992
RELEASE: February 1993

Ohmigod! There's been a build-up of dangerous gases, resulting in a rather smart new platformer from Apache Software. Send Simon Byron. And quick.

Jack Dee may well be the hard man of comedy but he wouldn't last long in a fight down a dark alley against the men and women at Apache Software, the developers behind this month's superb coverdisk demo, Super Methane Brothers. The company was formed back in April 1993 by Delvin Sorrell, a programmer who's had a string of hits to rival Take That's (except, of course, Delvin's hits were computer games and not pathetic weepy ballads created by an anorak-wearing bloke in a recording studio).

Delvin is an opinionated man. He knows what he hates and he'll make no bones about telling you. "I hate project managers saying that they think a certain thing shouldn't be in a game when the development team think otherwise. I also hate it when people dismiss a game before they've even seen it. There are some people in this industry who won't take a shoot-'em-up seriously if it's not on the SNES." Blimey. He certainly didn't spill my pint.

Of course, this clear perception of the rights and wrongs within the computer games industry means that Delvin and the rest of the gang can steer clear of the pitfalls many development teams with know-all, pompous project managers often become trapped in. "The development teams tend to know best which is why Super Methane Brothers is very much a team effort," he states.

As you've probably gathered if you've played the demo, Super Methane Brothers follows the exploits of two brothers, but what you may not realise is that they're called Puff and Blow. They're trapped inside a magical fortress of time, from which escape is only possible by traversing 100 single-screen levels populated by all manner of crazy creatures. It's a supremely playable arcade extravaganza, designed with one clear objective in mind: to make it playable.

"We decided that we'd do a very simplistic, playable game which people can immediately get into but with much more to the gameplay than first meets the eye. Super Methane Brothers is like an iceberg: you may think you know what's on the surface, but there's much more underneath. That's a nice quote, that, isn't it?





"Super Methane Brothers is like an iceberg: you may think you know what's on the surface, but there's much more underneath. That's a nice quote, that, isn't it?"
Delvin Sorrell, SMB's project manager.

"There's stuff in the game which you'll notice happening but won't realise why. There's almost a puzzle aspect to Super Methane Brothers. You can access hundreds of bonus features by performing specific tasks and once you know why you'll spend much of your time trying to make it happen again.

"For example, if both players complete a level with a specific digit at the start of their score they'll be transported to a special bonus screen. They're not going to know why it happened until they've played the game a few more times."

Apache are developing three versions of SMB in tandem: a standard A500 one, an A1200 version, and something for CD32 owners to get their teeth into. "We decided to write three versions because there's no point in doing half a job. If people buy a powerful machine they want to be able to play games which utilise the hardware at their disposal. They don't expect to play an A500 game on their more advanced machine.

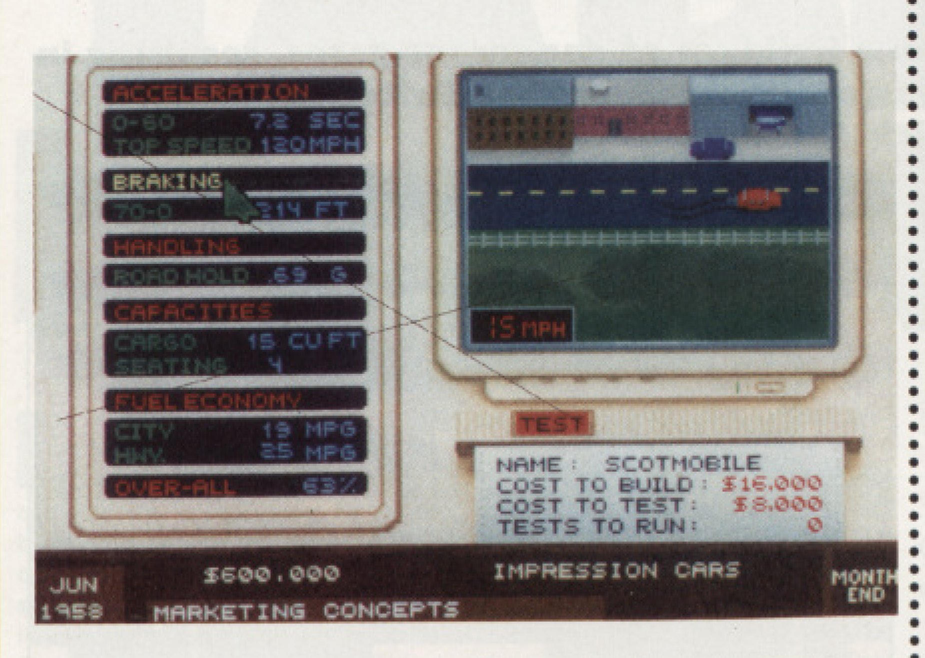
"The CD32 version will have eleven tracks of CD-quality sound, AGA graphics and run faster than the A500 version, obviously. The A1200 version will have more sound effects, also be in AGA mode and also run faster than the A500 version. Surprisingly, the A500 version is in non-AGA mode and has standard music and sound effects."

No matter how well Super Methane Brothers sells, you can be sure of one thing - there won't be a sequel. "A lot of software teams produce one kind of game and then publish endless variations on that theme," thinks Delvin. "We're going to avoid doing sequels. We may release data disks to go with games we've published but they'll only be available at a budget price or on magazine coverdisks."

Super Methane Brothers has turned out exactly how Delvin anticipated. "It's a beautiful game to play. Like many old 8-bit games, it's simple and fun, which is the most important thing of all."



DETROIT
Impressions

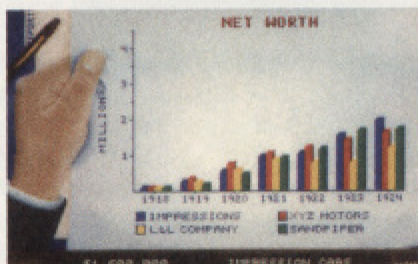


Ever fancied yourself as a bit of a Henry Ford? Ever fancied creating the car of your dreams and then mass producing the thing? Well, thanks to a new game from Impressions Software, your chance may have come.

Detroit is what Impressions are calling 'the ultimate automobile sim', and places the player as the MD of a car company from the year 1908 to 2008 (I'd like to know what he eats to stay alive so long!).

You can invest in research and technology, decide which car systems to invest in and design new cars using the technology available to you at any particular time. Using a simple mouse click, you can select which system you want for your car and then see it appear on the prototype before your very eyes. Obviously, the parts and systems will change as the years roll by, and it's down to you to decide what goes





inside the car and what it looks like.

The program then uses various sophisticated routines to appraise the car according to various criteria, and depending upon how well you've designed the thing, it will either send the vehicle back to the drawing board, or allow you to rework it. Should the prototype do well in tests, you'll be offered the chance to begin assembly and get the model into production.

You must then decide how many factories or assembly lines to allocate to producing the model, and how to market it. Of course, to sell the car you need to have opened up a sales office - which can be set up all around the world - and choose how you'll promote your range of cars (magazines, billboards, sponsorship, radio, television are among the options available).

Apart from the headache of designing a half-decent car in the first place, problems also come in the form of strikes and wars (!), not to mention the three computer or human opponents you'll be up against (at the time of writing, modem play is a fair possibility).

In the words of Impressions, "This is set to be the biggest and best Impressions product yet - you can bet on it." In fact, I can't bet on it (because I have no money) but it all seems very interesting indeed.



BREACH 3
Impressions

"Once more unto the breach, dear friend, once more." I wrote that, I did. Well, I did just then, anyway - some slap-head wrote it originally, and very good it was too. But - I don't hear you ask, but will pretend I do - what am I on about? Well, Impressions are about to reveal Breach 3, and what a sequel to a sequel it looks to be.

If you're not familiar with the Breach series then let me help. You take control of a squad of marines, with a number of turns, and a number of weapons, to kill a number of bad guys, and complete a number of tasks. It's really more complicated version of the more well known Sabre Team or Laser Squad.

Breach 2 was immensely popular with gameplayers, and Breach 3 looks set to offer more of the same, only with a much improved presentation system, not to mention a healthy number of tweaks.

Breach 3 will use elements of the successful CDSI2 interface found in Rules Of Engagement 2, giving players all the data they need on screen, while making the play area large enough to allow players to make the tactical decision necessary.

Breach 3 improves over Breach 2's turns-based system by introducing marines with their own personalities - using the same traits featured in Rules of Engagement 2 - meaning that the marines will decide how to react when an enemy comes within range. So that this feature doesn't scare off strategy players who don't like arcade elements, the game can be frozen and surveyed and strategies can be formulated for when the action starts again. Thus the game becomes a more time-allocated affair, with each action taking a certain amount of time, much in the same way as Sabre Team.

It's really a game that needs more space to explain, but fear not, strategy fans, we'll give you more as we get it.



GLOBAL DOMINATION

Impressions



Throughout the Earth's history, there have been some fairly horrendous people - Adolf Hitler, Genghis Khan and Rod Hull to name but three. Imagine, if you will, that at some point in the future, a sophisticated DNA retrieval and cloning technique makes it possible to bring together some of history's most evil and megalomaniacal leaders, and then pitted them against each other in a quest for world control. Well, that's exactly what Impressions (who appear to have taken over Mini WIPs this month) have done with their latest war sim/strategy game - Global Domination.

As unlikely as it may seem, you are to be put up against such rivals as the above (although I believe Rod Hull has been left out of the final version) along with Abraham Lincoln, Napoleon, Julius Caesar, Queen Victoria, General Custer, Henry V, and, oh yes, and a caveman (?).





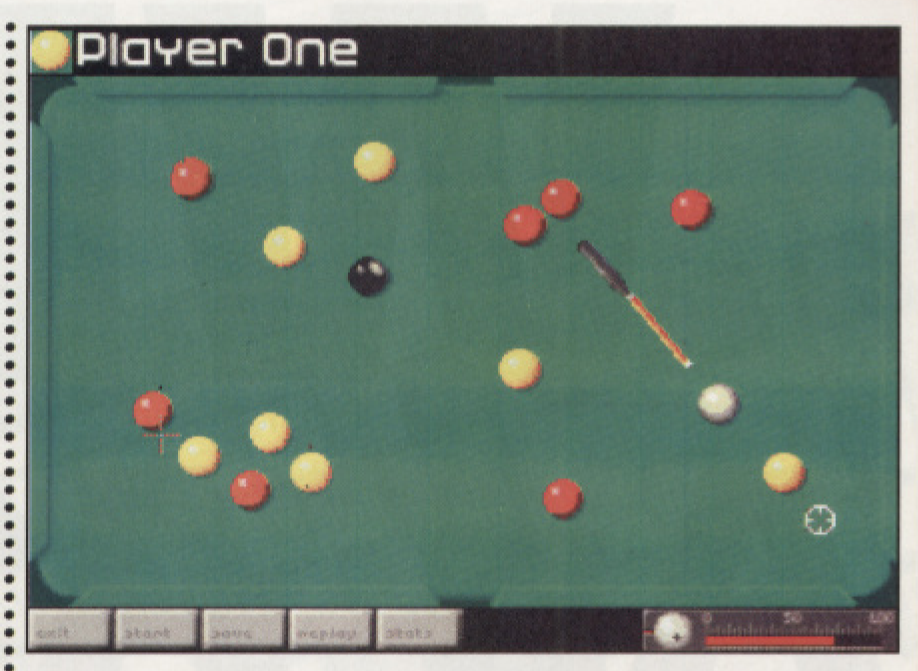
The world you fight over - which incidentally can either be Earth, a randomly generated world, or one of your own making - is divided into territories, with each of the rivals owning only a small number to begin with. To succeed you must expand your empire and take over the world before your enemies do.

The game can be played at a number of difficulty levels, and at its simplest involves building and moving armies; these armies including any of ten types of fighting units, from infantry to jets. Each of the leaders has a different style of play, and you'll need to build up specific strategies to defeat each one.

Played at a reduced complexity, you are able to use diplomacy to ally yourself with like-minded enemies, and can create an intelligence bureau which will gather information on each enemy and assemble special forces which can perform covert ops in any of the territories.

At full complexity, however, conflicts between armies take place over months (instead of being resolved instantly) and you can choose to fight conflicts as satellite battles, giving tactical orders to individual fighting units on scrolling battle-maps.

I've only scratched the basic elements of the game here, but rest assured, strategy/war sim fans are in for a bit of a treat.



ARCADE POOL

Team 17

I was sad as a child you know. Had you popped round my house when I was about 13 years old, you'd have found me hunched pathetically over my faithful Spectrum, happily squelching those little rubber keys in an attempt to play the odd game or two (see, I told you I was sad). Mind you, I think the game that gave me real saddo status was a simple but fun (well ,I thought so at the time, anyway) version of Pool, complete with yellow and red balls and little blip sounds on collisions (pushed the Spectrum to its very limits). Well, thanks to a forthcoming release from Team 17, sad times are here again.

Arcade Pool is billed as a pool simulator for one or more players featuring excellent animation and smooth movement of balls (feel free to invent and enter your own silly bracketed remark here - e.g. chortle, gfaw etc).

The program will contain the official rules for a number of different pool variants, including 8 ball, 9 ball, Speed Pool, and Killer Pool, as well as a point-scoring one player challenge and plenty of options to change the rules to your own specifications (changing ball colours and displays, etc). It also features digitised Pool sounds (kids diving in - that sort of thing, I imagine) and also crowd applause effects just to give that authentic 'I'm drunk and the whole pub is watching me' feel.

The game will cost £9.99 and will come on one disk featuring an intelligent 'detect and use' feature for the AGA chip-set, giving much enhanced display during play.

It's often these simple looking games that prove to be the most addictive (I should know!) so it's with bated breath that we await this T17 offering. Stay tuned for more as we get it.



WIN! An A1200!

PLUS! 3 copies of Disposable Hero!
PLUS! 5 Disposable Hero T-shirts!
All courtesy of Gremlin!

Do you know how well the A1200 is selling? No? Then let me tell you. I haven't got the exact figures, but I can inform you that Commodore just can't make enough of them. It's true! Do you know why? No? Let me explain...

It is, quite simply, the finest home computer ever invented. That is, until the next Amiga-based machine comes along. The A1200's 32-bit technology really is second to none, enabling it to display over 16.8 million colours. That's red and yellow and pink and green, orange and purple and blue, multiplied by 2,400,000! Not only does the A1200 have ever-growing software support, but it's also able to load and run the majority of most Amiga games of old. And you can't ask for much more than that, can you?

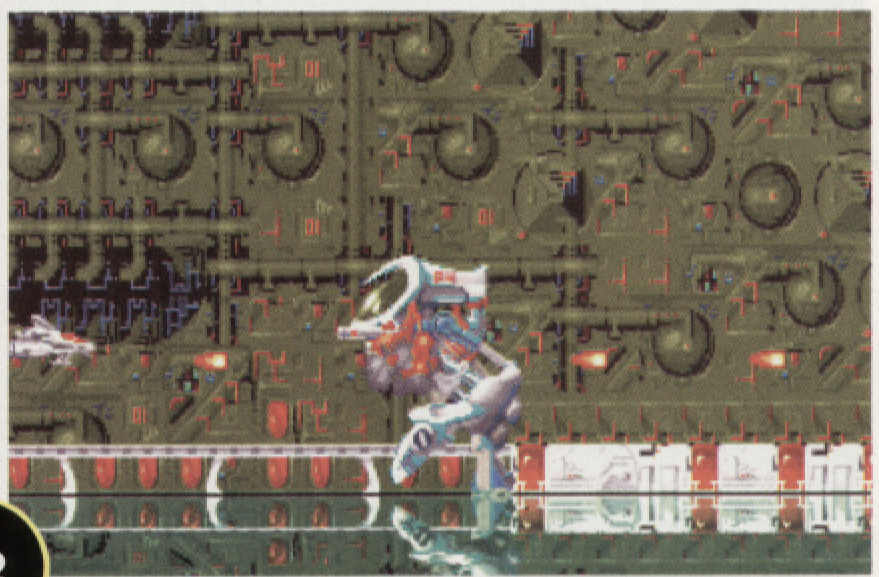
We love the A1200. In fact, we'd quite like to marry it. Or give birth to it. Maybe even both. At the same time. But the one thing that prevents us from eloping to Gretna Green Registry Office/Maternity Ward with one of these delightful gaming machines is the little matter of three hundred quid. Basically, we haven't got any money.

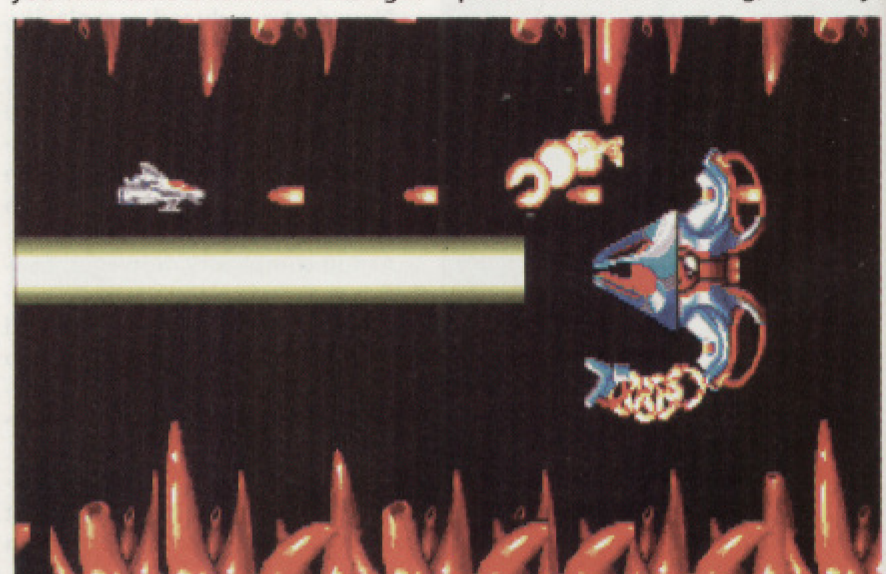
When God invented competitions, he did so with the sole intention of annoying anyone working for The One. Sure, ordinary members of that scurrilous rabble known as 'the public' are frequently offered chances to win often unbelievably expensive prizes, but all kinds of rules and regulations prevent us hard-working journalists from entering. It's bloody typical.

The thing is, an A1200 is such a brilliant prize that we were all tempted to resign just so that we could legitimately enter. In fact, we'd got as far as typing up all our resignations when David pointed out that if we all left then they'd be no-one to write the competition, and subsequently no A1200 to win.

So it looks like we'll have to offer it to you. But rest assured that we're going to make winning it as hard as possible so that not one of you will stand a chance in hell getting a free A1200. If we can't have it, neither can anyone else.

We may, however, give away the copies of Disposable Hero, mainly because we've got our own anyway. The game was developed by Euphoria and is a graphically impressive shoot-'em-up with more playabilty than you can shake a shaker at. Action a-plenty, violence a-plenty - this game's got the flippin' lot. A prize well worth winning, basically.







And that's not all. We've also got five Disposable Hero T-shirts to give away. One size fits all, so even elephants can enter. We haven't seen any of these fashion accessories yet but we expect they're quite trendy. However, if they turn out to be nice then we'll be keeping them. Sorry.

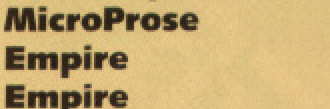
So how do you enter? Well, just take a look at the huge grid to the left. You may think that it's simply a load of gobbledigook, but on closer examination you'll realise that it actually contains loads of words: namely 'disposable' and 'hero'. Just cross out every occurrence of these words (some letters are used more than once and each word can run vertically or horizontally, but not diagonally or backwards) and you'll be left with 34 letters, which can be rearranged to form the titles of three Gremlin games: a shoot-'em-up, a platformer, and a driving game.

Just jot these three games on a postcard or the back of an envelope and send it to: Great Gremlin Giveaway Compo, THE ONE, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU to arrive her by no later than 28th March. The first correct entry we pick out of the hat will receive the A1200, the next three correct entries will be sent a copy of Disposable Hero, and the next five correct entries will qualify for a fabby T-shirt. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

D	I	S	P	O	S	A	B	L	E	H	E	R	O	Z	H	E	R	O
I	O	H	E	R	O	D	I	S	P	O	S	A	B	L	E	D	H	O
S	H	E	R	O	D	I	S	P	O	S	A	B	L	E	L	I	E	H
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S	O	S	I	A	P	O	B	L	E	H	E	R	O	E	H	O	H	O
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B	I	H	P	R	S	A	H	H	E	R	O	O	L	O	R	A	R	I
L	S	E	O	H	A	B	E	O	T	O	H	E	R	O	O	B	O	S
E	P	R	S	E	B	L	R	D	I	S	P	O	S	A	B	L	E	P
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H	E	R	O	S	H	E	R	O	P	H	E	R	O	R	I	O	T	E


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Calls cost 36p per min (cheap) 48p (other times). Max possible cost £3.60. Please be sure you have permission to make this call. Where Instant Win is indicated there is no tiebreaker and prizewinners are decided instantly by playing a deciding game. Other competitions close 31.5.94. All competitions involve multiple choice questions. Nintendo/Sega/Amiga/Gladiators & Star Trek are all registered trademarks of their respective companies. We are neither related to nor endorsed by them. For rules and winners' names please send SAE to Aladdin's Cave, PO Box 28, Northampton NN1 5DS.
ImagesMar

REVIEWS











HOW DO WE DO IT?

At The One we believe a picture speaks a thousand words. That's why our reviews are a bit different and, we like to think, a lot better than the rest. Each game review begins with a short introduction, telling you what sort of game you're reading about and outlining its plot, then we follow that up with illustrations, maps and diagrams accompanied by informative captions that demonstrate every aspect of how the game plays.

Finally there's the Verdict where we explain the game's good and bad points in detail, so that you can work out precisely whether the game's for you or not. Bear in mind that although a review is only written by one person, the whole team play every game reviewed and the Verdict and scores are based on everyone's input.

Based on years of research this is, quite simply, the best game reviewing system devised by man.

Probably.

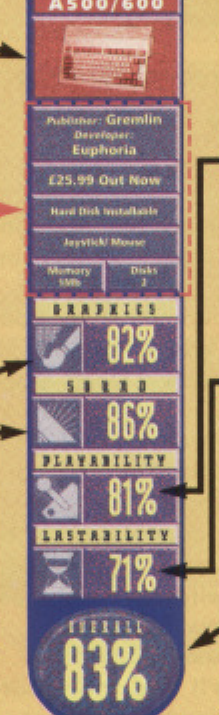
THE VERDICT PANEL EXPLAINED

This piccy shows you clearly which Amiga - A500/600, A1200 or CD32 - the game is being reviewed on.

This panel indicates who is publishing and who created the game, along with essential info such as how much the game costs, when it'll be released, the control system(s) used, how much memory your Amiga needs to run it, how may disks it comes on (and therefore how much swapping you can anticipate) and even whether you can install it onto your hard drive.

This percentage indicates not only how well-drawn or animated the graphics are, but also how well they complement the game. Some games look great in static form but may be slow and jerky 'in the flesh' which will be indicated by a lower-than-expected Graphics score.

As with Graphics, the Sound score isn't based purely on the quality of the tunes and sound effects, but also on how well they enhance the game. For instance, an all-guns-blazing shoot-'em-up with a silly bouncy jingle wouldn't do well here.



A1200

CD32

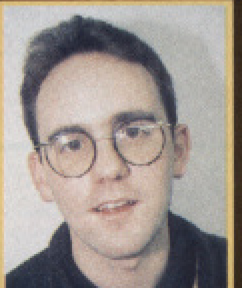
Playability, which we hope will soon be incorporated into the Oxford English Dictionary as a 'real' word (write to your MP!), indicates how easy the game is to get into and how much fun it is to play. Things like poor control or cluttered screens will take this score down.

Another 'new' word, Lastability indicates whether you're likely to finish the game in a day or a year, and also whether the game is one you're likely to keep returning to time and time again. It's a rather important mark, especially with games being so expensive.

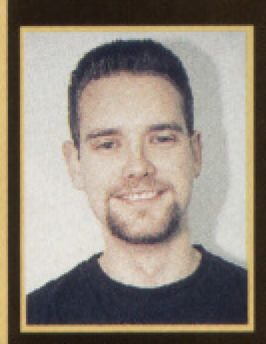
The Overall score is the definitive guide as to whether a game is good or bad. It takes into account many factors other than the four main ones listed above, which is why it's not simply an average of those scores. Anything scoring 85% or above is considered an essential purchase.

The Amiga family is even bigger than ever now, with people able to buy A500/600s, A1200s and CD32s. Here's where we'll tell you about how the game runs on the machines not covered in the main Verdict panel, as well as whether any enhanced or cut-down versions of the game are planned.

DAVID UPCHURCH
Fame has most certainly gone to young David's head since his appearance in Snackerama (see our exlusive preview on page 20). "I'm gonna live for ever," he declared before leaping into the air, legs akimbo. "I'm gonna learn how to fly," he continued, much to everyone's bemusement. "High!" he carried on, "I'm gonna make it to heaven. People will see me and cry..." That's quite enough, we reckon.



SIMON BYRON
"People are strange," reckoned Simon, "when you're a stranger. Faces look ugly when you're alone." We were just about to interrupt this obviously intelligent banter when he then continued: "Women seem wicked, when you're unwanted. Faces look ugly, when you're alone." We thought that was it, but we were wrong. "When you're strange. People come out of the rain. When you're strange..." Just what he was going on about is way beyond us but we're fairly confident it was something to do with getting the lyrics wrong.



MATT BROUGHTON
"I'm too sexy for my shirt. Too sexy for my shirt, so sexy it hurts," admitted gorgeous Matt. "And I'm too sexy for my cat, too sexy for my cat, oh pussy, oh pussy cat," he pouted." He then continued his little ditty by comparing his overall sexiness with things like his car, his shirt and his party. Is this man living on planet Earth? Answers on a postcard please, to: Definitely Not Compo, The One, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



JENNY ABROOK
"All I do each night is pray," Jenny confessed, "hoping that I'll be a part of you again someday." We were just about to ask her who she wanted to be a part of when she continued: "All I do each night is think. Remembering the times I closed the door to keep my love within." Good grief - all this from such bashful young lady. But that's not all - she also estimated that "it'll only take a minute, girl. To fall in love. To fall in love." Okay then. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen. fourteen, fifteen, sixteen... damn - I knew I'd never reach sixty.



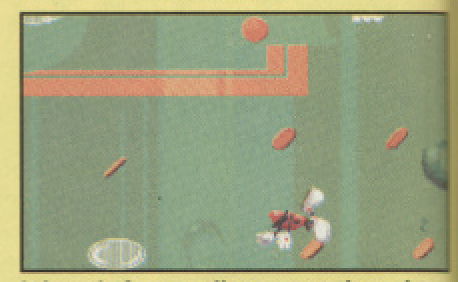


(Above) These balloon are great for hanging on to and you'll find loads of them scattered about the place hiding Cool Points and bonuses. You have to be fairly accurate with your jumps when moving between them but because the joystick control often feels a bit rigid it's easy to make a mistake and end up having to go back to the start of the trail.

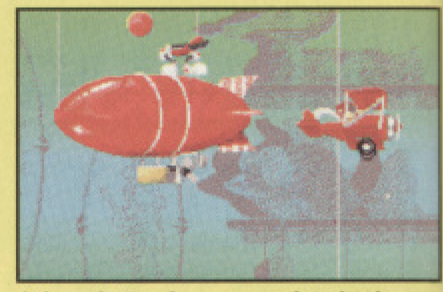
(Left) This level is completely weird. As soon as you start off, Cool Spot cartwheels down one of the many slopes, gaining speed all the way. This carries on until he reaches the bottom where he slides onto a lift which raises him back to the top and down another slope. If you leave the joystick alone it's possible for this malarkey to carry on for ages, so it's best to try and regain some control as early as possible.



COOL SPOT



(Above) If you collect more than the required amount of Cool points then you'll often find yourself transported into a bonus game where you can pick up all manner of additional points-boosting items. I've only managed to reach this bonus game (there are five others) on Easy level so I'm not sure whether or not they all take place in 7-Up bottles but if you asked me to speculate then I'd have to say that I imagine they do.



(Above) It's always good to look down on people, especially members of the lower classes (that was a joke, by the way - many of my best slaves are Working Class), so it's fortunate for everyone that by pulling back on the joystick and pressing fire the screen will scroll down, revealing the hazards below.

The words 'cool' and 'spot' accurately sum up Simon Byron if you substitute 'cool' for 'git', so we decided that he was the best person to check out Virgin's latest platform game.

This may come as a shock to most schoolchildren, but the word on the street is that spots are now cool. Yes, it's true - but I wish someone had told me this when I was just a young lad at that 'difficult' age with hormones whizzing through my body creating enormous pus-filled mountains on my face.

There would have been no embarrassing silences whenever someone brushed by me in the school canteen and ended up with more 'custard' on their dessert than they bargained for. People wouldn't have been able to rival the wit of Oscar Wild or George Bernard Shaw by laughingly referring to me as 'spotty'. Puberty would have been moderately bearable.

But if Virgin really want to base a game around a cool version of something ugly and offensive then why didn't they release 'Trendy Elephant Man' or 'Hip Sharon from out of EastEnders'? There's enough potential in those two licences alone to keep the company ticking over until the end of the century.

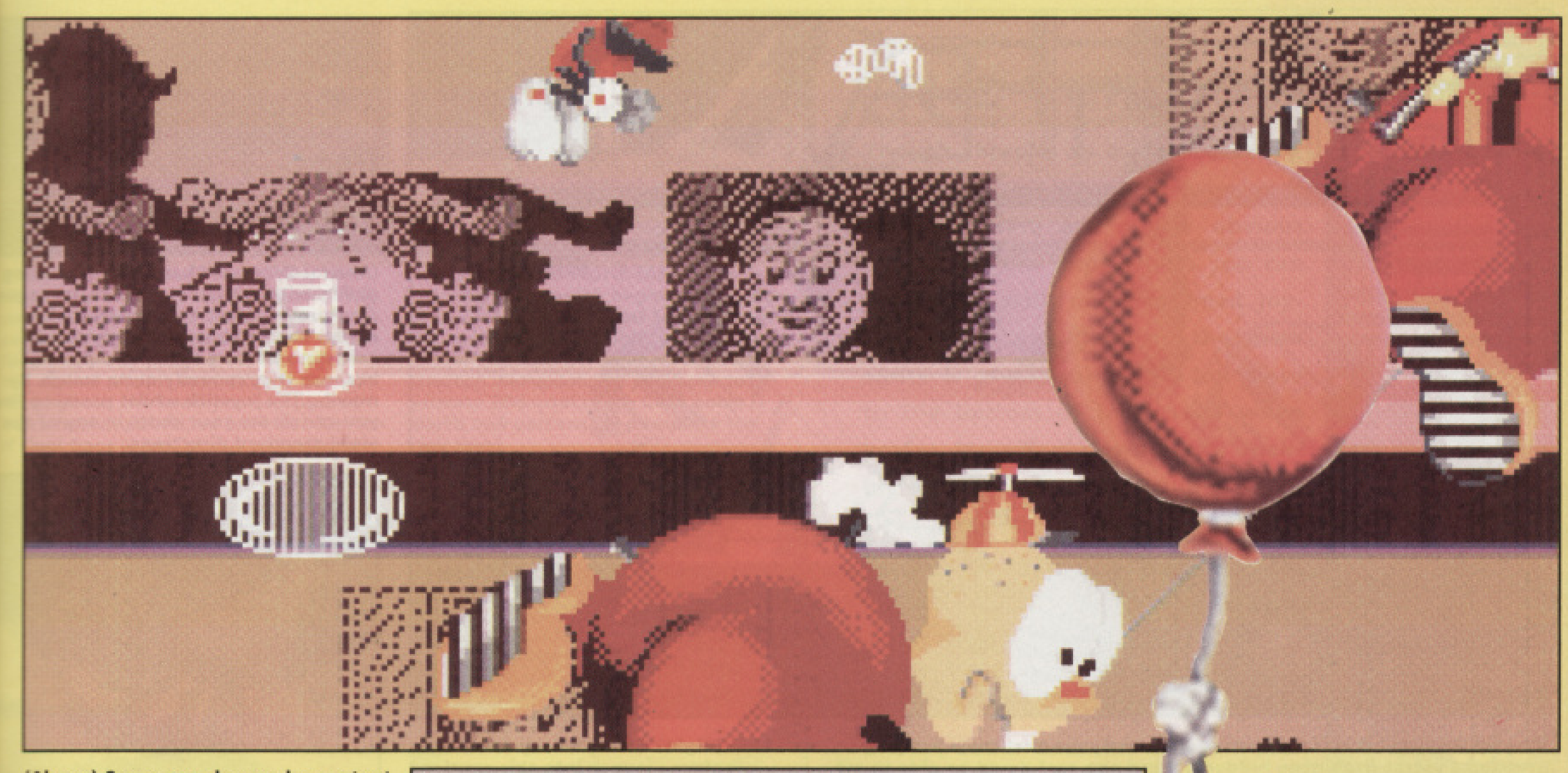
Still, far be it for me to tell them what to release - they obviously know their job better than anyone else as their latest platformer based around the circular 7-Up character proves.

He's a spot, you see. And he's also cool. Hence the name Cool Spot. And if you weren't at all surprised by the fact that this is a platform game then you'll be even less amazed when I tell you that this is a console conversion. Yes - a platform game from the consoles! Whatever next? A flight sim from MicroProse?

So to sum things up, then, Cool Spot has to run and jump his way through eleven themed levels (popping in to the six bonus levels along the way if he's clever) in an effort to release his spotty chums who have been imprisoned in cages and hidden deep within each world. And that's basically it. There are a few features worth mentioning, but you'll find those outlined in the captions so let's not waste any more time here. Instead, let's find out whether or not Cool Spot's any good.

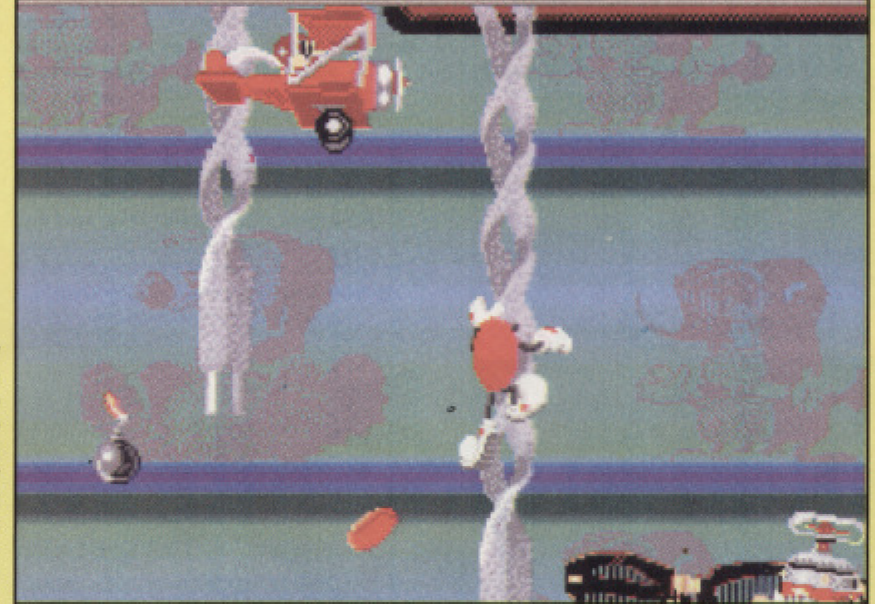




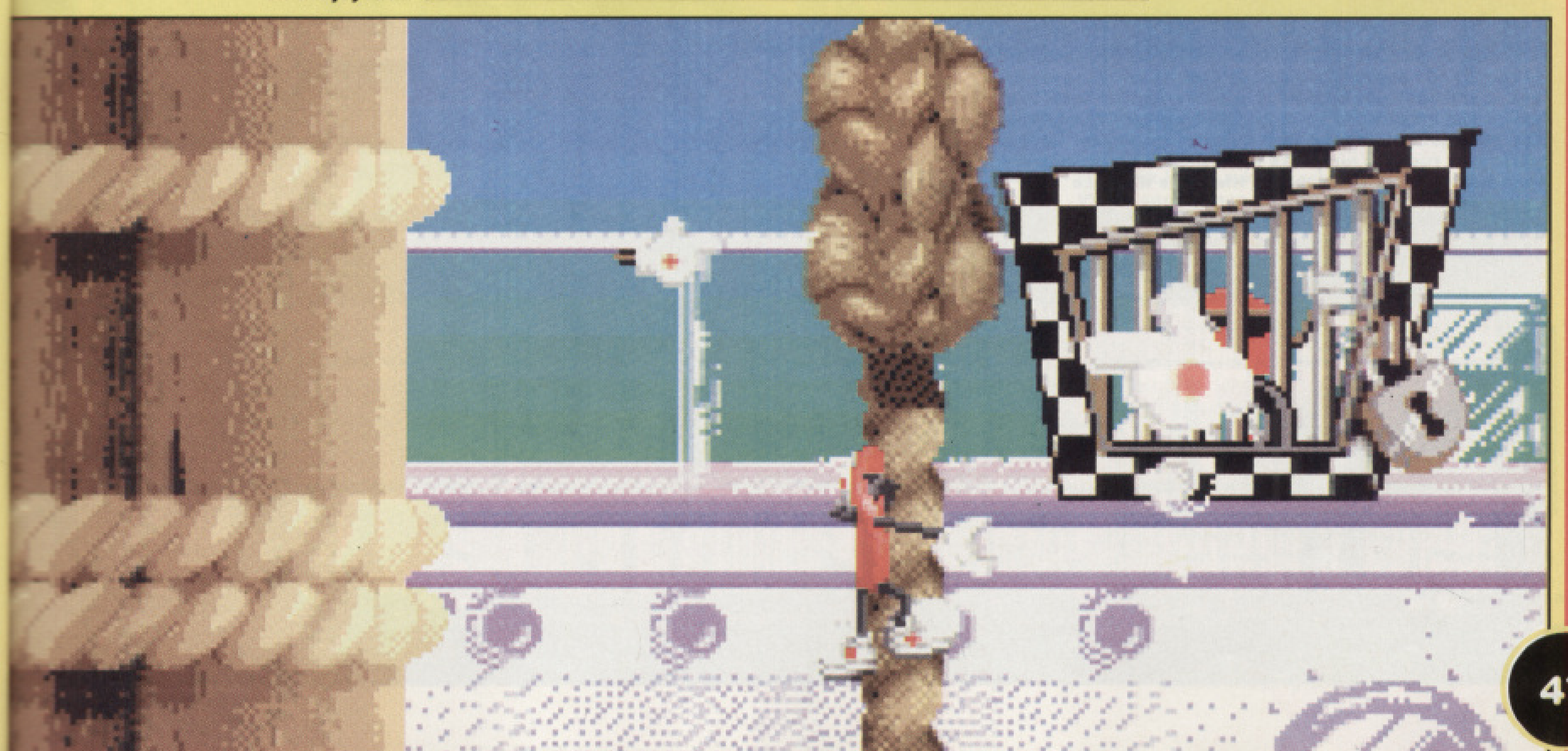


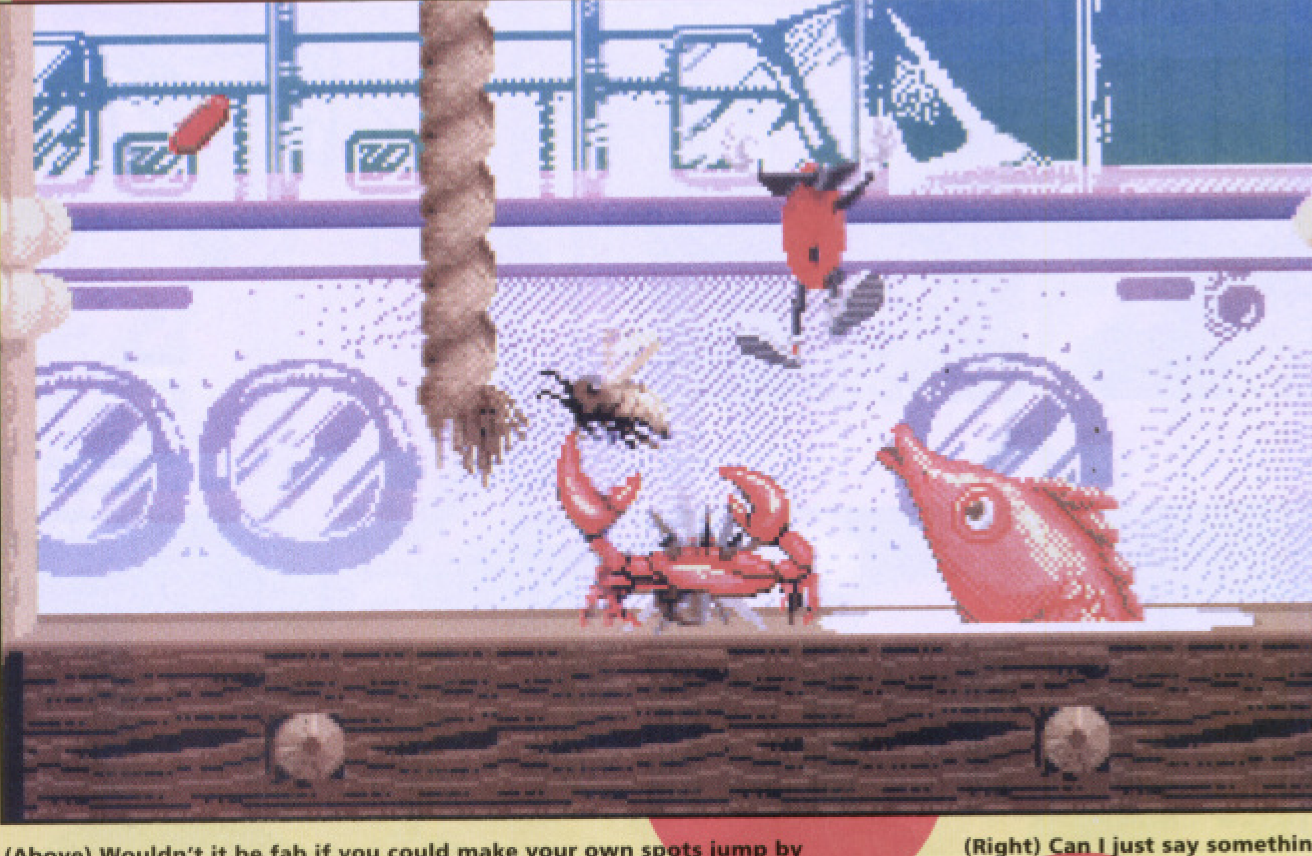
(Above) Some people may be content with forever blowin' 'em, but Cool Spot's forever bouncin' on 'em. I don't know why I dropped all the 'g's there, so please don't ask. Anyway, bubbles may be handy for making your bathtime fun, but they're even handier for gaining height. If you leap onto one of these it will hurtle you in the direction you're travelling (usually towards the next bubble) before disappearing for a few seconds. Great, eh?

(Right) Have you ever noticed how acne always starts off at the bottom of your neck but always manages to ascend your nose until it reaches the highest point on your forehead where it is more easily noticed by ridiculing friends and more difficult to burst discretely? Cool Spot's a bit like that. He'll climb just about anything he comes across if you push up on the joystick.

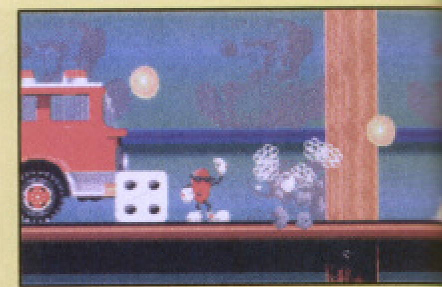


(Below) Each level contains one of Cool Spot's mates trapped in a cage and it's your objective to free them by firing at the lock. Of course, you've got to collect the required amount of Cool Points and find the cage first, but once both these goals have been fulfilled the you'll discover that the lock offers no resistance. If you do attempt to break it before you've got enough Cool Points you'll be told to sod off.





(Above) Wouldn't it be fab if you could make your own spots jump by pressing a secret firebutton hidden behind one ear? You'd be able to off-load the majority of your acne onto passers-by and save a fortune on Clearasil. Until they invent something like that, though, you'll have to be content with Cool Spot's leaping abilities which can be used to avoid most nasties. Platform gurus will be saddened to learn that you can jump on their heads and turn them into bonuses.



(Above) Cool Spot has a nifty shootin ability with which to pick off the rogu creatures. Almost everything that moves can be shot, although some monsters take an age to disappear because they're really quite tough. By moving the joystick whilst pressing Fi you can direct your shots in any of th eight standard directions.



(Right) Can I just say something before I launch into this caption? Thanks. I know this screenshot doesn't relate to what I'm about to talk about, but a suitable picture would have been a bit boring. So it's not one of our traditional cock-ups, alright? Anyway, on with the caption. After each level, you're awarded points for the amount of time you had remaining and for any additional Cool points you retrieved. An extra life is awarded if you perform especially well, so bear this in mind as you play.

(Above) You can move Cool Spot around with the joystick and if you continue to hold it in one direction Acne Man will speed up until he's running. The only point of doing this is to get you from A to B quicker - you never have to perform a running jump like in Flashback because every leap Cool Spot can do reaches the same distance

Hello. I'm a mouse and I fire things at Cool Spot. Great, eh?

Here's where Cool Spot begins this level. The only way to go is to the right...

Spikes? In a platform game? Whatever next - crumbly platforms?

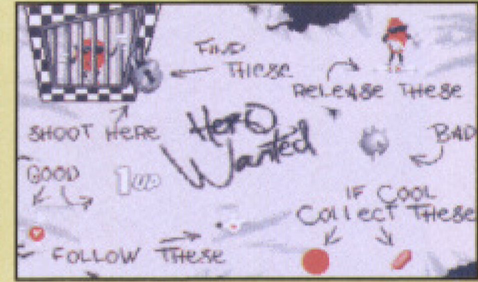
A Cool Point. Get it. Now.

Arachnophobia!!!





Every time you touch one of the baddies, your health will deplete. Nothing surprising, true, but the way it's presented is quite smart, with Cool Spot's face gradually peeling off the top of the screen until it tumbles off the bar. Throughout the level you can pick up extra health points, so look out for 'em if Cool Spot is just about to tumble.



Before you stride forth into a new level you're given a quick beginners' guide as to what you're meant to be doing. The amount of Cool points you have to collect depends on what level you've selected. For example, you have to become 30% cool (each Cool point is worth one percent) to complete the Easy level.



THE VERDICT

Though there is an awful lot wrong with Cool Spot, I can't help loving it to bits. There are a few obvious flaws, like the leaps where you can lose a life with one mis-timed joystick move and the way the main sprite is often positioned too close to the bottom of the screen when you're travelling downwards, making moving yourself around a damn sight more frustrating than it should be, but for some reason these seem not to matter during play. Yes, you'll be annoyed in places. Yes, you'll scream and shout at the harshness of some of the jumps. But you'll always come back for more. I suppose a lot of Cool Spot's appeal is from Cool Spot himself. For a red circle with a couple of arms and legs bolted on he's got a tremendous amount of personality - in the same way that The Big Breakfast would be nothing without Chris Evans I'm sure that if Cool Spot was replaced by some generic sprite then it wouldn't be as fun to play. You may remember that when David reviewed Mick & Mack he harped on about how the game lacked that indefinable 'something' and I think that's the difference here. Even though both games are virtually identical in the way they play, Cool Spot comes out on top. It's nowhere near as fast as Zool, as slick as Soccer Kid or Superfrog, but it's more than playable and that's all that matters.

A500/600

Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Developer: In-house

£30.99 Out Now

Hard Disk Installable

Joysick/Joypad

Memory	Disks
1Mb	3

GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	84%
LASTABILITY	82%
OVERALL	84%

A1200 / CD32

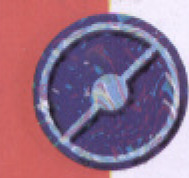
"I'll look in my release schedules," stated a Virgin spokesman when I enquired about an A1200/CD32 version of Cool Spot. "Nope, none of those are listed here. We'll be doing a PC one, though." Like, thanks.







(Above) I was beginning to like Cool Spot more and more until I reached this level which features loads of 'instant death jumps' - the ones which cost you a life if you mess up. Take your time and they shouldn't present too much of a problem but they're still annoying and frustrating.



FATMAN

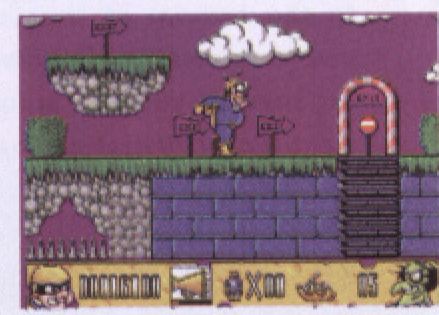
THE CAPED CRUSADER

David was meant to be reviewing Black Legend's platformer, but the subject is a little too close to home. This, then, is a job for the rather skinny Simon Byron...

Yeah, very funny. Fatman, you see, is a hilarious parody of Batman, my all-time favourite comic-book hero, so to say that this platformer from Black Legend started off on the wrong foot is a mild understatement. Thankfully it's not one of the most inspired or playable releases ever to land on my desk, so there's no need to swallow my pride and heap praise on such an offensively-titled game.

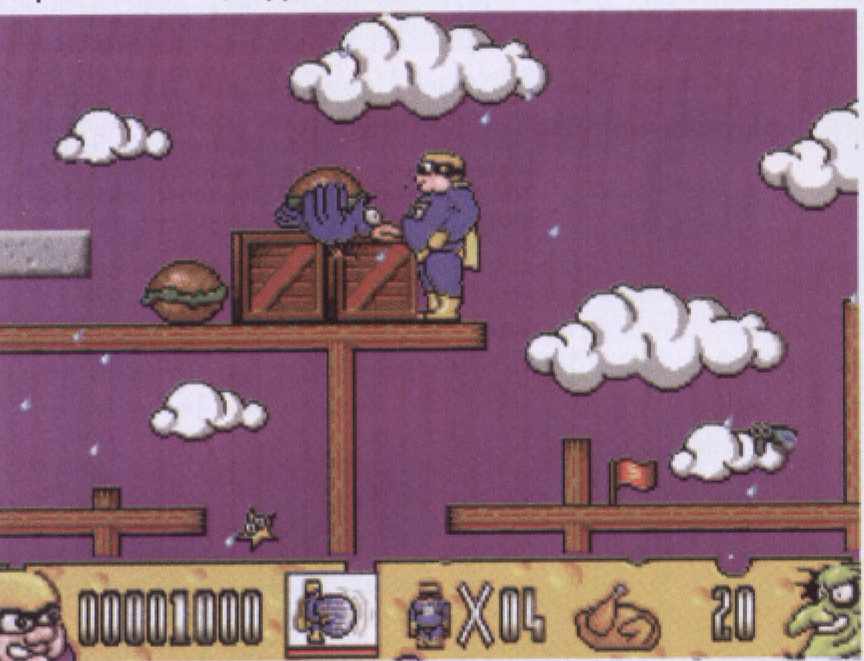
You play Roy Fat (oh, my aching sides!), an inhabitant of Cartoonland and also the inventor of the much sought-after Food Duplicator, a machine which can, er, duplicate food. Ted Thinsin, director of Thindicate Inc (the Cartoon equivalent of McDonalds) has decided that he'd quite like to own the Food Duplicator and so has kidnapped Roy's missus. Cue dramatic music. Dim the lights. It's time for Fatman to burst into action...

It's this plot that Black Legend claim make Fatman just that little bit different from most platform games. Also, like this 'hilarious' story, most of the game's features are intended to amuse. And they do: the way Fatman butts his adversaries with his stomach (tee-hee), burps at baddies (stoppit!!!) and bumps into walls (I've wet myself) are some of the most laughter-inducing things I've come across. Except, of course, they ain't (yes, I can talk fluent slang if needs be).



The exits are indicated by rather obvious signs so you've no excuse for not noticing them. These departure points aren't usually hard to find but most won't allow you off the level until you've met certain objectives, so be prepared to hunt down particular kinds of objects before you can pass through.

Now, I may be a misery by nature, but I have to confess that no platform game has ever succeeded in making me grin, and I suspect the same is true for many of you. No, that's a lie - Pegasus, from Gremlin, had me in stitches, but for all the wrong reasons. So the question must surely be: is Fatman funny? Well...



Fatman's main method of attack is to whack the baddies with his Upchurch-like gut. He can collect other weapons en route and by crouching down and pressing Fire you can cycle through all the available options. Extra weapons come in the form of carrots, belches and mushrooms, which have varying effects on the bad guys.

THE VERDICT

Forget the 'witty' plot and the hero's comical methods of attack, by far the most laughable thing in Fatman is its control method, and this is the main failing-point of the game. Platform games live or die on how instinctive the character-handling is and, in the case of Fatman, there are doctors either side of it shouting "Clear!" before wiring it to the mains in an effort to introduce an element of playability. Some of the jumps are so awkward that it isn't unusual to find yourself attempting the same leap four or five times when most better conceived games would allow it with no problems. Because of this, it's hard to force yourself to play on when by doing so you'll only be subjecting yourself to yet more frustration. The moaning doesn't really stop there, either. Graphically, it's well below par, with the main character mincing around the place like he's got his buttocks stitched together. Black Legend reckon the game contains cartoon-style graphics, but they've obviously been watching the wrong kind of animations. I consider something like Bubba 'n' Stix to have cartoon-y visuals and if you had to sentence one game to life imprisonment for crimes against artistry then there'd be no hung jury, that's for sure. Fatman could have been so much better than this - I can see what the programmers are trying to say, but they're talking a different language. There are some nice ideas, sure, but these are swamped by such ridiculously awful gameplay elements that it's almost impossible to see them. When you consider that there are better examples of how a platform game should be done (many of which are now on budget), it's hard to justify spending £26 on this ultimately flawed release.

A500/600

Publisher: Black Legend
Developer: In-house

£25.99 Out Now

Not Hard Disk Installable

Joystick

Memory	Disks
1Mb	4

GRAPHICS	57%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	55%
LASTABILITY	55%
OVERALL	57%

A1200 / **CD32**

A1200 owners get only slightly better graphics which hardly show off their machine's capability and, er, that's about it. If you've got a CD32 then be thankful that you'll not even have to contemplate playing Fatman because it won't be released on CD.







"It's more than a straight flight sim:, D.I.D. have emulated multi-million dollar flight simulators. When you play TFX the first thing that hits you is the detail of the landscape... over seven million square km appears on screen, with hills, roads and mountains all in the right place." THE EDGE

"The graphic detail is quite superb, with stunning visuals and strong sense of image, TFX is quite often like watching a movie... when I first saw TFX my jaw dropped so far it took me 15 minutes to find it again! It's fast, good looking and fun." PC REVIEW







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THE LABYRINTH OF TIME

We've got no less than four CD32 games in for review this month so let's press on with Simon Byron's appraisal of the first.

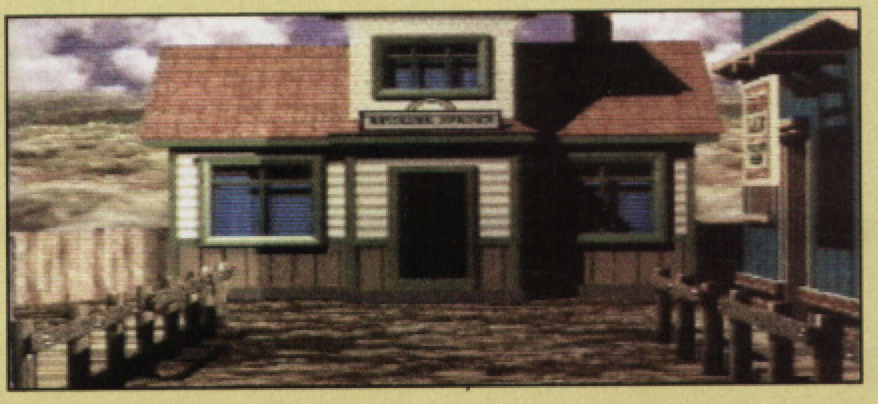
These days, most graphic adventures are jolly old souls with slapstick set-pieces a-plenty and japes galore. We've laughed at the exploits of Guybrush in both his quests. We've giggled at some of the one-liners in Kyrandia. Even Beneath A Steel Sky occasionally had our sides splitting as the characters interacted with each other. It seems as if Amiga Adventureland is a pleasant place to live.

Up until now, that is. Ladies and gentlemen, lock yourself in the toilet, dust down that old revolver you've been keeping by your bedside 'just in case', insert it into your gob and deposit your brains over the wall behind because the most depressing scenario this side of Schindler's List has most definitely arrived.

The packaging itself gives no indication of the down-beat nature of the game, so the grainy monochrome pictures and accompanying text which form the moody intro outlining the events leading up to the start of your quest come as an unpleasant surprise. It's full of lines like "It's hard to say when your days all became the same: dull as old chrome and without joy". And "With any luck the train won't break down tonight. It never seems to break down on the way to work, only from it". Pass the aspirins, would you?

Plot-wise it's as ludicrous as they come. You're making your way home from work after another uneventful week when up pops some mysterious bloke named Daedalus with some ridiculous tale about a king who's currently constructing some weird labyrinth which will enable him to conquer all of time and space. Deep breath. Daedalus, concerned at the prospect of an all-powerful universal emperor, has decided to contact you so that you can journey into this labyrinth and thwart the megalomaniacal ruler's plans.

Why this so-called Daedalus couldn't have got off his bottom and dealt with the problem himself isn't quite clear but before you can question him further you're thrown headfirst into one of the most aesthetically-pleasing adventures ever to grace the Amiga. Yes, put your hands together because the world's first true multimedia adventure has arrived. And the verdict is... Well, over there, really...

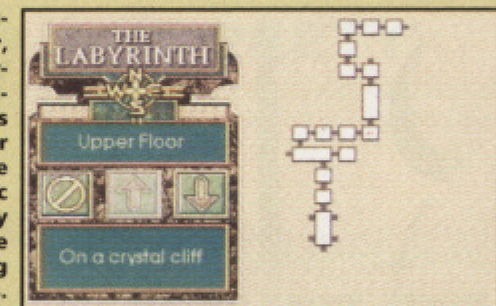


(Left) Every location is depicted with a fully-rendered graphic and many come with incidental animations which are initiated whenever you perform certain actions like opening doors or operating levers. It takes the CD drive roughly a couple of seconds to access each new graphic but the game stores the previous location in RAM just in case you decide to retrace your steps.



(Above) Here we witness a more traditional puzzle. Checking the mapper reveals that you can walk through this wall but there's no visible keyhole or door handle. Maybe, just maybe, this sliding block puzzle acts as a lock and by placing the numbers in the correct order you'll be able to gain access to the locations beyond.

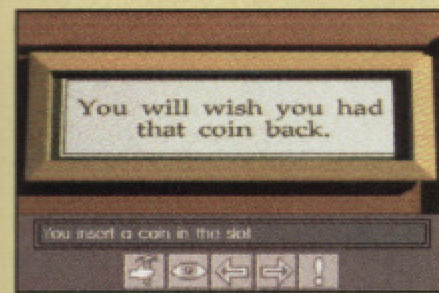
(Bottom) As you progress through the game, the soundtrack changes accordingly to suit the location. These tunes vary from sounding like 70's horror films to something out of Twin Peaks and have been lovingly recorded in a professional studio and are nothing short of brilliant. Spot effects are surprisingly rare but have all the more effect because of this.



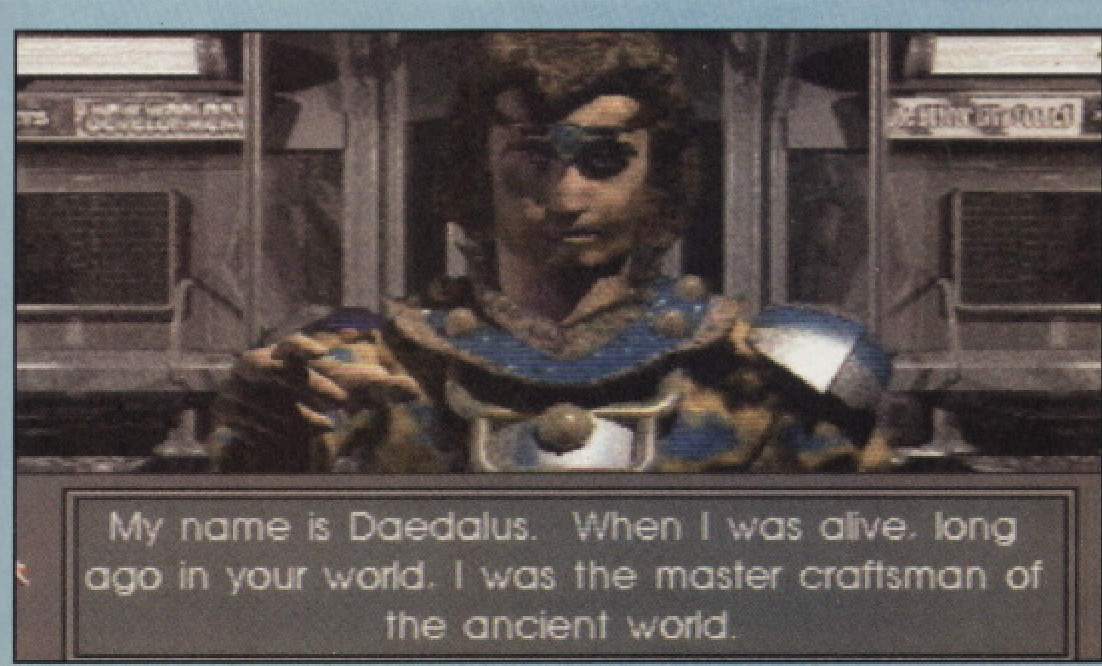
(Right) One of Labyrinth's handier features is the self-mapper, which fills itself in as you discover locations and proves invaluable when negotiating the mazes that crop up. In fact, this mapper completely negates the purpose of the mazes - if you're methodic and check the mapper regularly you can never gets lost so these 'puzzles' come across as being nothing more than tedious.



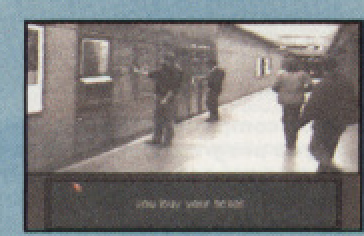
(Above) The interface takes a bit of getting used to and even then it doesn't allow that much freedom when it comes to object manipulation. The only advantage of using a joypad rather than a mouse is that you can cycle though the 'hot spots' (the areas of the screen containing something 'interesting'), so you needn't click everywhere in the hope of discovering anything useful.



Your inventory is very basic. You have to scroll through text descriptions to select the item you require. Once selected, you can use an object by clicking on the hammer icon and then on the item you wish to use it with. Unfortunately, the programmers have included lots of sarcastic responses to silly requests, which are some of the un-funniest I've ever had the misfortune to come across



(Above) Here's Daedalus, the figure who interrupts your journey home by teleporting onto your train during the intro. He's animated like most computer-generated humanoids (i.e. not very realistically) but he's concerned at the plight of mankind so we'll forgive his limited movements. The rest of the intro takes the form of a few grainy black and white images (right) of your trek to the underground.



THE VERDICT

Labyrinth Of Time's obvious selling point is its graphics. There can be no denying that without the advent of CDs this game would never have been possible, so as far as utilising the storage medium goes it scores very highly indeed. Unfortunately, the adventure itself doesn't quite come across as being as impressive as the graphics. Don't get me wrong, it's an engrossing game and no mistake, but the nature of the puzzles necessitates a great deal of plodding around and examining everything the program will allow. This wouldn't be such a bad thing if it wasn't for the fact that most examinable objects are only there as opportunities for the programmers to display yet more ray-traced graphics. After you've scrutinised your ninetieth light bulb in an effort to discover a useful object, things rapidly become frustrating, I can tell you. A more intelligent interface would have helped here. Something like a Monkey Island-style verbs system which highlighted key areas wouldn't have gone amiss because the icon method Labyrinth employs does seem a bit dated and a little too limiting, especially when you're using the joypad. However, if you're prepared to put the hours in then you'll be rewarded with a decent quest which is both atmospheric and taxing. The lack of disk swapping makes the sometimes slow nature of Labyrinth a bit easier to bear and the constantly changing music helps generate interest and tension. This is by no means ground-breaking stuff or as impressive a game as Steel Sky, but you'll certainly get your money's worth if you do decide to splash out.

CD32

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Terra Nova

£24.99 Out Now

Not Hard Disk Installable

Joypad/ Mouse

Memory 2Mb | Disks 1(CD)

GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	80%
LASTABILITY	82%
OVERALL	81%

A1200 **CD32**

Absolutely no chance, mate. You'd need over 600 floppy disks to store all of Labyrinth's graphics and the swapping, as you can imagine, would be horrendous. Still, CDTV (remember those?) owners are in for a treat because they can play Labyrinth on their antiquated machine.

BRIAN THE LION

Cleverly recycling the same gag he used when he did the WIP a few months ago, Matt 'The Gnat' Broughton (wasn't even funny then, was it?) gets his proboscis into Psygnosis' latest platform

If you read my recent WIP - and what a fine example of modern literature it was - on Brian The Lion (or BTL, as I affectionately like to call him), you may recall the story of a rather unattractive chap by the name of Geeza who, according to the plot, was about as likely to pull Cindy Crawford as Cliff Richard is of singing a song without Jesus being mentioned somewhere.

Fortunately for Geeza, his faithful servant Worm tells his master of a magic crystal by the name of Chris, which has amazing regenerative and rejuvenating powers. Needless to say, Geeza grabs Chris and disappears into the night on a desperate mission to become just like David Hasselhoff from out of Baywatch.

The only thing Geeza didn't reckon on was Chris' best mate Brian, who's not only a lion but a fairy hacked-off lion at that due to having had his friend abducted. So (and yes, you've guessed correctly) you task is to take Brian The Lion through a number of hazardous levels as he tries to rescue the aforementioned crystal.

Brian has all the standard skills of any platform hero that you've seen before, only with the obvious added advantages that are only available to a member of the large cat family. Should a nasty person come towards you with the sole purpose of breaking your nose, a brief moment on the fire button with build up a roar that will quite literally scare them to death, or leave them shocked and stunned, giving you the chance to run in and use another of your feline skills, namely hitting people with your big claws.

You'll pass through many different zones in your quest, including steamy jungles, ice-covered worlds (yes, complete with slippery platforms - groan) and lava-spattered volcanic regions to name but a few. Every now and then you can expect helpful hints from Chris (who manages to spirit himself to your aid), while all manner of strange and nasty creatures attempt to replace your eyes with hot toffee apples.

So what are you waiting for? Get your Bermudas on, and let's party...



(Right) Well, Zool nicked them for his second outing, so I don't see any reason why Brian should feel obliged to leave some of the more established platform items alone. Yep, they're all here - swinging platforms, dissolving platforms, spring boards, even jumping on crocodiles heads (I haven't done that since I was a Frogger!) Well, Reflections said that they wanted to bring console elements to the Amiga, and you can't say that they haven't gone for it big time.





(Right below) Sub-games in Brian don't just come in the form of bonus levels - there are different games to be encountered. Here at the end of a world, Brian must fly across to the next island on the back of Sally the Seagull (probably). It's not exactly Project-X, but it does break things up, and it moves very nicely too. It starts out as a fairly simple shoot-'em-up distraction, with tons of birds and fish attacking you en masse, but after a while it takes on a more 'end of level' feel as you need to avoid the hanging rocks while not going too near the giant crabs that are just dying to snip your vitals off. Fun fun fun.



(Above) No platform game would be complete without a goody-filled shop, and this is no exception. As you progress through later levels, you'll occasionally see clouds resting on the platforms. Touch one of these and they'll rise into the air and drag you inside (inset). You're now in Honest Buck's Mega Store, and can use your crystals to purchase anything from extra lives and continues to speed-ups

(Below) Another console-reminiscent moment is the map shown between levels. Once you've finished a level or bonus level, Brian is taken back to this map and shown the new pathways that have been made available. You can then move him onto the next level of your choice, complete with irrelevant and non-helpful name. Needless to say, before you can leave each 'island' you need to go up against, and defeat, some sort of big bad guardian. NO! REALLY?





TAKE THAT! (AND PARTY)

If you're lucky enough to collect a decent amount of crystals and make it into Honest Buck's Mega Store, you'll be able to spend your winnings on any of the following special abilities....

ROAR

You'll notice from some of the screenshots that there's a power-up bar at the base of the screen. By holding down fire, you can build up a huge roar that can then be released in the face of anyone in your way. Smaller creatures will die of fright immediately, but larger animals like these tiger things are only stunned for a few seconds.



SPEED

Grab yourself a speed-up icon and you can whizz about 'till your heart's content. This isn't incredibly handy in all situations, but will quite often give you enough momentum to jump over particularly nasty areas of scenery.

CLAWS

This is the standard 'weapon' - the swipe! It's not a long range weapon, but pretty damn fine when someone runs right up to your face. Most of the smaller creatures are better dealt with by jumping on, but your claws can't be beaten when it comes to finishing off stunned baddies.





(Left) Ah yes, an Ice World. How original, I don't think backwards (eh? - Everybody). Just when you thought it was safe to load up a platform game without having to endure a few levels of inertia-filled 'bliss', along comes Brian The Lion and his amazing frozen landscapes. Actually, this particular level isn't too much of a problem as it's just an opportunity to collect much-needed bonus items. Better get moving...



One of the things that BTL excels in is the amount of incidental animations that have been dropped into the main character. Leave him for too long on the ice worlds and he'll shiver, land in lava and he'll shoot into the air holding his cheeks (ahem!) with a convincingly pained look on his face, and so on. Here Brian's trying to avoid falling off the edge.

THE VERDICT

I'd be lying if I said that I hadn't deliberated long and hard over my overall mark for BTL because at the end of the day, for all the good points in the game, there's still something missing. Graphically it's very appealing, and some of the console-style effects - zooms, rotations, etc - are absolutely excellent. Likewise the tunes and sound effects are all done very well. But there's something about the main character and the overall 'fullness' of the game that leaves me unsatisfied. I think one of the reasons for my enjoyment of Zool 2 last month was the improvement of the character and, to be honest, I don't think I was aware of just how important that was until now - basically, Brian is just too soft looking. When you get to some of the later levels with ghouls, ghostly trees and so on, a lion with a semi-perm and a pair of Bermuda shorts just looks out of place. The control system is very nice and, apart from the sometimes frustrating ice levels, you'll never have any trouble getting Brian to do exactly what you want, but one major mistake I think the programmers made is the use of parallax - in particular, the way the backgrounds move in unison with Brian. In some of the more empty-looking levels, you might be jumping from, for example, one crocodile's head to another, and at some points you're just floating in free space with no landmarks to show you if you're moving at all. It's only when a piece of scenery appears and goes hurtling by, that you realise how wrong you've been in your 'leap of faith', leaving you tumbling into the sea, lava or off the screen - minus one life. It's quite obvious that a hell of a lot of time and thought has gone into BTL and it is without a doubt a very good platform game - it just lacks that certain 'something'.

A500/600

Publisher: Psygnosis
Developer: Reflections

£25.99 Out Now

Not Hard Disk Installable

Joystick/Keyboard

Memory 1Mb | Disks 3

GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	82%
LASTABILITY	83%
OVERALL	82%

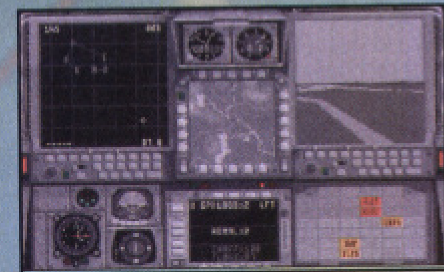
A1200 / **CD32**

There's the strong possibility of an A1200 version featuring enhanced sound and graphics appearing at some point in the near future, but no decisions have been made towards the CD32 at the moment.

BRIAN THE LION

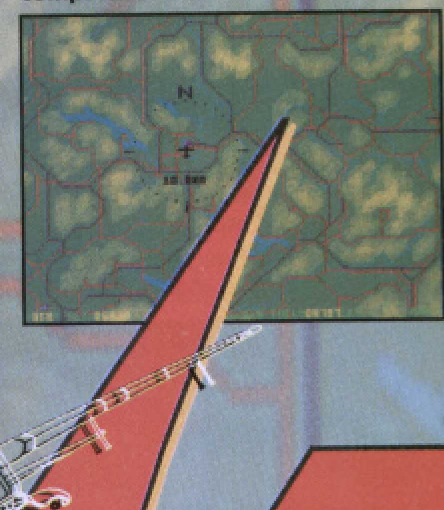


After every flight, whether in simulation, training or a full mission, you will receive a briefing showing targets hit and the reasons behind that flight's end. As you can see from my 'impressive' record here, first I managed to go a bit too far into enemy territory and 'broke' my plane, and then followed that up by crashing into the ground a few seconds after taking off during a training mission. Pretty good huh? Anyone fancy a quick nip around the sky?



(Above) You can 'move' back into the navigator's chair from the cockpit and make use of the instruments and readings available. The central local map display is similar to the full-screen map - but with a smaller area - while the PLN display (to the left of the screen) shows a schematic of the flightplan currently stored in the navigation system. The Thermal Imaging and Laser Designation (crikey!) gives a view from a steerable downward-looking camera system on the soft moist underbelly of the aircraft. What I'm trying to say is that while this screenshot may look fairly boring, it's actually quite important.

(Below) This is the Full-Screen Moving Map which, as the name suggests, uses the entire screen area to display a map. Because of this size, the map covers a larger area and offers better resolution than any of the other map displays available. You can also zoom in and out (if you can remember which of the keys do it!) and the map scrolls automatically to keep the aircraft in the centre, surrounded by a compass rose with north marked.



TORNADO

Matt Broughton puts on his best adventuring hat and prepares for platform fun. But first, he's got to review a flight sim. Happy days are here again...

I know it was a load of macho-male-bonding hogwash, but I enjoyed the film Top Gun. The slightest whiff of a Tomcat and I'm the first one on the beach playing volleyball without my shirt on and trying to chat up the nearest Kelly McGillis look-alike. Actually ask me to get inside one and I'll be off like a shot. Ask me to get inside anything else, like a Tornado for example, and I'll hesitate - no Tom Cruise, no way.

Which is a bit unfortunate, really, as the Tornado is the 'star' of Digital Integration's new flight sim, a game which seems to have been in development as long as the aircraft it features. The Tornado saw active service during the Gulf War, primarily as a ground-attack aircraft, and now you can re-enact them in the comfort of your own home.

The game presents you with a set number of specific missions to complete. The missions are preset (i.e. not randomly generated) and split into three categories, with simulator missions, training missions and combat missions spread out over a number of geographically-varied zones, making a total of about 100 missions in all. These missions range in scope from destroying ground targets, such as supply trains and truck convoys, to taking on other fighters and helicopters in dogfights.

Once in the air you'll find you spend about half your time in the 'driver's seat' and the other half 'around the back', keeping an eye on navigation and weapons via a complex array of instruments and computer-controlled tracking systems, so it's slightly more demanding than your typical flight sim.

Your 'plane can be kitted out with an impressive range of weapons, and comes complete with all the abbreviations that you've come to know and love (including BL755, SMD, LGB, ADV and EAST 17). Regular readers will also be please to know that the 332-page manual includes the word 'chaff' with impressive frequency. (What? - David.)

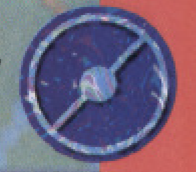
The package is fairly impressive, with the manual being joined in its box by four disks, a technical supplement, two full-colour glossy maps, and - of course - the standard key guide, which manages to scare the plop out of you with something in the region of about 120 different function key arrangements (not including mouse functions). Comprehensive? You betchya!

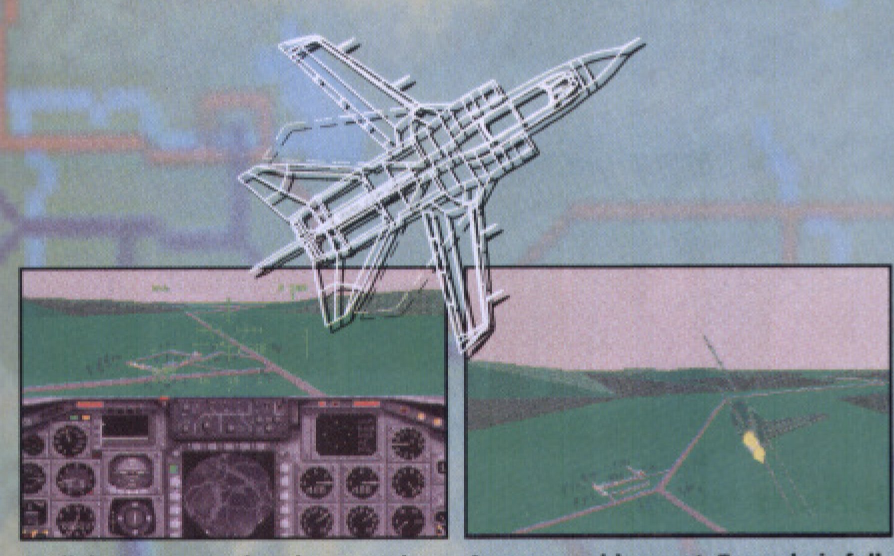
I'm not in a position where I'm allowed to run away and hide in a cupboard at the sight of a flight sim, so come with me now as I grow an extra twenty-six fingers, and attempt to get this baby off the ground. Apparently.



This mission planner is just about the most important screen in the game. From here you can review or plan a single mission or a squadrons' flightplans for an entire air-war down to the smallest detail. Apart from the obvious map details, many other sub-screens can be opened, including weather conditions and the aircraft payload

The payload window displays all the possible payload items, plus an indication of the fuel load and the total aircraft weight. The manual gives a detailed description for each of the load possibilities for self-defence or attack weapons.

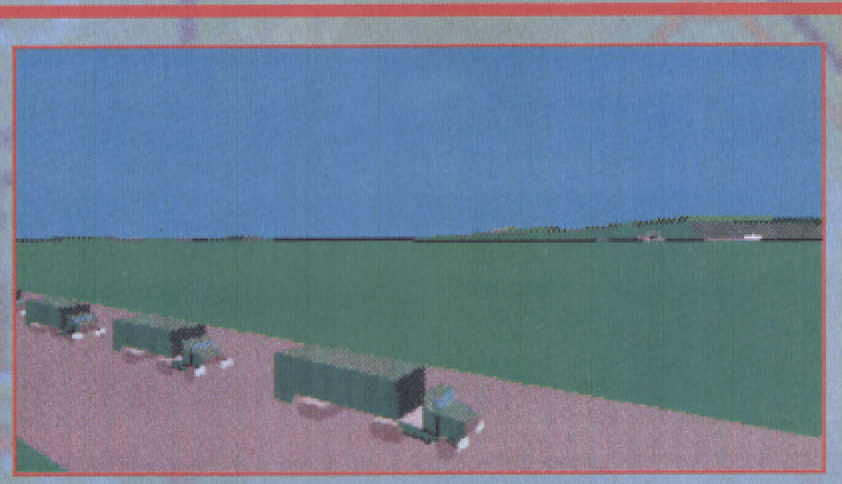




Well, here I am again - desperately trying to take an interesting screen shot from a flight sim, and then trying to make it sound interesting. Needless to say, this is the sort of view you can expect to spend a fair amount of time looking at during Tornado, with the extensive control panel and the textured ground rolling hither and tither. Er... might I draw your attention to the gorgeous selection of dials, or perhaps the Head-Up Display is more to sir's liking?

As you would expect, Tornado is full to brimming with external views, and this is just one of the more useful ones - it tracks a little way behind your aircraft, allowing you to get a better overall feel of your whereabouts. There are a number of views ranging from satellite to weapon-mounted cameras, and all can be rotated and zoomed in and out. In honesty, the main cockpit view is the most practical but what the hell, all these views take up review space don't they?





The game world is filled with computer-controlled aircraft and ground vehicles that are a-moving an' a-grooving around the place at the same time as you are, and may be viewed by using the 'drone' view from the cockpit. You can toggle around all the enemy and allied units to watch their activities as well as (and this is what the manual says) 'impress your friends'. No thanks. I'm not quite that sad.



THE VERDICT

There's only one thing that needs to be said in summing up Tornado, and that's "Hurry up!". Yes, I'm afraid to say that the game is let down on one count and one count only - but what an important count it is. Tornado is graphically pleasing and technically excellent, and even though there are hundreds of keys to get used to, you can get into it quite quickly and with a minimum of fuss. But (and here it comes) the game is the best part of unplayable simply because of its speed. Unless you're used to games that run at about two frames per second (if you're lucky), a game of Tornado quickly becomes a frustrating round of 'match the action on-screen with the joystick movements'. Initially, the drag of the game doesn't appear to be too bad - you just need to stop yourself overcompensating from time to time. But once any action starts (and I use the term 'action' loosely) it's just impossible to get any satisfaction from the game. Due to the heavy emphasis on navigating your way around, it rapidly loses any instant-action 'dogfighty' feel and starts to move towards the Airbus end of the sim genre, but doesn't really manage to get close enough to either style of game to be worth comparison. The attention to detail and the vast number of missions available do Tornado a great credit but, at the end of the day, what's the point in having all this technical excellence if the game can't run fast enough to let you enjoy flying in the first place. I'm loathe to murder a game that has so many quality elements, but you should only look at this game if you're the sort of person that can handle slowing your brain down to a speed that matches the poor screen update.

A500/600

Publisher: Digital Intergration
Developer: In-house

£TBA Out Now

Hard Disk Installable

Joystick/Mouse/Keyboard

Memory 1Mb | Disks 4

GRAPHICS 71%

SOUND 38%

PLAYABILITY 41%

LASTABILITY 62%

OVERALL 43%

A1200 **CD32**

The game earns itself a few extra percentage on all counts when played on the A1200 as things do improve speed-wise, but to be honest it still needs to run much faster before it stands a chance of getting the marks it technically deserves. There are no plans for a CD32 version.

SEEK & DES

David Upchurch skillfully avoids any oh-so-hilarious 'chopper' gags about Mindscape's new helicopter-based blast-'em-up

Now look, I know you're probably reading this around February time so what follows is going to be awfully out of date. But please bear with me, because ithis is a sad but true tale and I want to share it with you.

You see, such are the deadlines we work to I'm actually writing this review the morning after our company's Christmas party where vast quantities of the old 'falling down water' were consumed. Of course, while such alcoholic excess always seems like a great idea at the time, the next morning (i.e. now) things don't look so rosy - my head feels like somebody's hammering six-inch-nails into it and my stomach is churning like a washing machine in the fast cycle. In short, I feel awful.

In perfect shape, then, to review a noisy 360° shoot-'em-up. Hmmm, yes. So far I've played if for about half-an-hour but the whirling images and explosions made me feel so rough I had to give up. "I know," I thought, "I'll get the intro out of the way. That shouldn't be too difficult - just recycle a bit of blurb from the manual, stick in a few brilliant 'chopper' gags and Bob's the bloke in the Sekonda ads."

So I turned to the manual ready for some plagiarising of the game's plot and what do I read? "Your mission - take control of the Apache helicopter and fly into enemy territory. Take out the designated targets and return to home base." And that's it. To be honest, it's the last thing I needed. "How," I cried, head throbbing and bowels grinding, "am I going to get an intro out of that, especially in my enfeebled state?"

Somehow, I seem to have managed though...



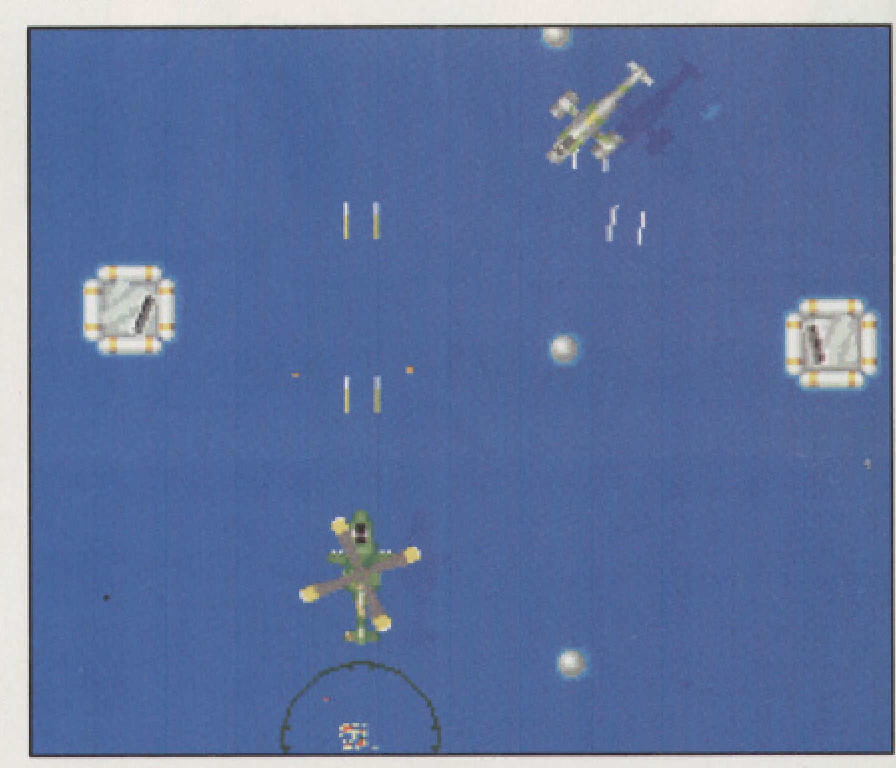
(Above) The sound effects throughout Seek & Destroy can't be faulted. As you lay waste to whole regions your co-pilot will chip in with the occasional scream of "Whoooaaa!" or "Overkill!"



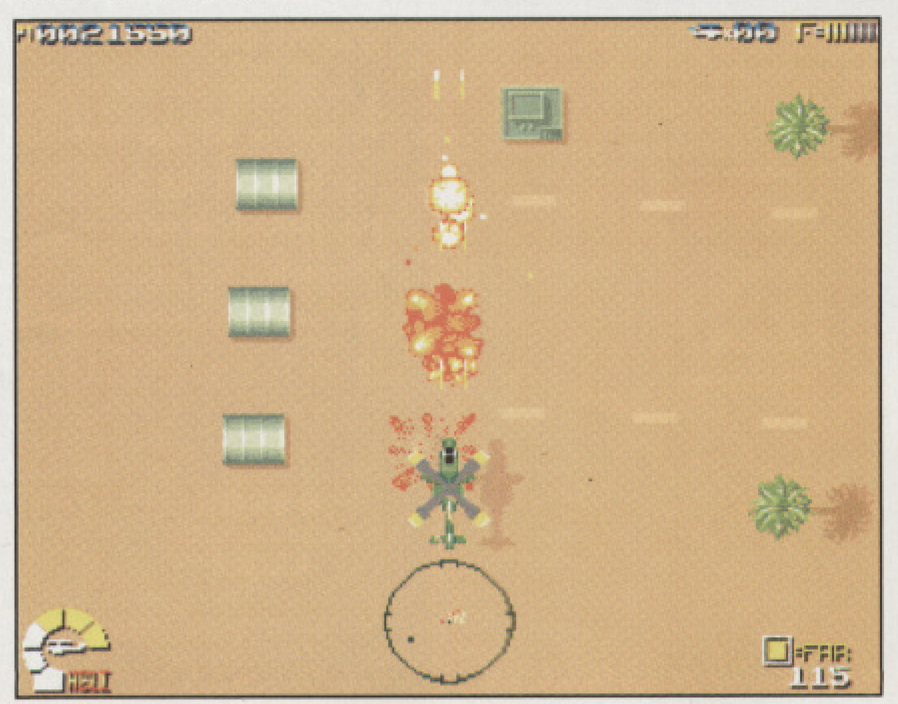
(Right) Destroying enemy installations often reveals extra ammo clips for your set of five weapons, which can be picked up in time-honoured fashion by flying over them. Rarer are upgrades for your shields and extra fuel (which effectively acts as extra time). These are slightly trickier to collect as you first have to land on them - best make sure you've cleared the area before descending for them.



(Above) Now and again you'll be asked to rescue some of 'our boys' who got left behind in the war zone and captured by the enemy. It's a bit like Rambo. But with a helicopter. To do this you have to actually land near the POW camps and wait for the little geezers to run aboard your gunship, which can be very hairy when there are enemy ships floating around



(Above) Seek & Destroy takes you and your chopper through several missions, each split down into three or four individual stages with their own specific objectives - typically blowing up a load of enemy buildings and/or vehicles. Every mission takes place over a differing type of terrain - desert, sea, icefield - although they have no effect on how the chopper handles or the game plays.



(Left) This is what Seek & Destroy's all about - mindless carnage and an aching, blistered trigger finger! None of the objects on the landscape rise higher than your altitude so there's no risk of crashing, allowing you to roam fast and free, zapping the enemy. Pulling left and right on the joystick rotates your view of the surroundings, rather than the chopper itself - don't drink beer before you play unless you enjoy wiping sick off your keyboard.

STROY

THE VERDICT

For ages decent Amiga shoot-'em-ups were fewer and farther between than the hairs on Paul Daniels' head. However, that's all changed over the last few months with the appearance of top blasts like Uridium 2, Stardust and Microcosm. Seek & Destroy, although it tries hard to impress, is sadly not quite in the same league as those games. In terms of the graphics and sound it can't really be faulted - the rotation effect is stunning and the sound, especially the sampled speech, is exceptional. And, in terms of bangs per buck, Seek & Destroy is great value - as you strafe an enemy base, causing the buildings and installation to burst into flames, and your co-pilot screams "Whoooaaa!" it's hard to resist the temptation to join in with your own adrenalin-fired war cry. Where Seek & Destroy falls down, however, is in its variety - or rather, its lack of it. As you start the game with a full complement of weaponry, you can see all the guns and missiles and what they do within the first couple of minutes of play, unlike most other blasts where bigger weapons are introduced gradually, enhancing the urge to the perservere. More seriously, there's very little difference between missions other than graphical - it's an endless cycle of dodge 'n' blast which, while very enjoyable at first thanks to the great visuals and sounds, soon becomes repetitive. There's little room for real tactics - there's no option for stealthy skulking behind hills or such like here - and the difficulty curve increases only by virtue of more and faster enemy choppers and tanks appearing on-screen. Vision Software has got a great game engine here - it's just a pity the game itself doesn't quite match up to it.

A500/600

Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: Vision Software

£25.99 Out Now

Not Hard Disk Installable

Joystick/Mouse

Memory 1Mb | Disks 4

GRAPHICS 86%

SOUND 93%

PLAYABILITY 85%

LASTABILITY 75%

OVERALL 78%

A1200 **CD32**

Sorry, A1200 owners - it appears that Vision Software are more than happy with the A500/600 version of Seek & Destroy so there's no special enhanced edition planned. CD32 owners, however, will be able to enjoy it, albeit unchanged, come the end of the month.

OVER KILL!

You have five types of weapon at your disposal, which you pick and choose between with a tap on the function keys. Let's take a look at 'em, shall we? No, come on, I've made an effort, so can you...

CHAIN GUN

Although feeble and tricky to aim, the chain gun has the benefit of having unlimited ammo. Even so, it's best left as an absolute last resort after you've run out of ammo on your other weapons.



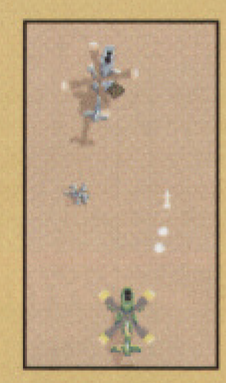
ROCKET

These FFARs (Folding Fin Aerial Rockets, fact fans) are the default weapon, i.e. the ones you always start out with. They don't home, so you have to be a bit careful with your aim, but they're damn effective.



INTERCEPTOR

This is an air-to-air missile. When selected, a yellow diamond target sight will appear in front of your chopper and lock on to any enemy ships in range - now just tap Fire to waste it. Simple-pimple.



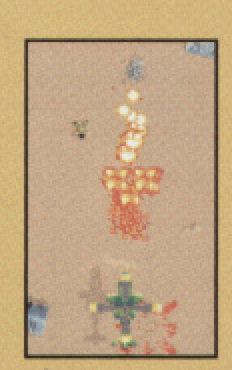
AIR-TO-GROUND MISSILE

As you might suspect from the name, these missiles are purely intended for decimating land-based targets, like tanks, rocket stations and Red Cross huts. Like the Interceptors they lock on, making life much easier.



NAPALM

If you like a good fry-up you'll love this weapon, which carpet-bombs the area in front of your ship with a rain of blazing death. This is most handy for clearing out clusters of buildings in



PIRATES! GOLD

Simon Byron puts on his wooden leg and sticks a patch over his eye as he casts his three eyes (one's got a patch over it, remember) over *MicroProse's* first CD32 game.

I bloody hate pirates. They're ruining this industry, you know, and if they keep on ripping off the softcos then no new games will be produced, resulting in less freedom of choice and an increased amount of crap software and...

Sorry. When anyone mentions the 'p' word I tend to launch off into a torrent of abuse so when Dave told me I'd be reviewing this game I was more than surprised.

"I will not," I stormed, "review a game based around the illicit practices of a bunch of criminals,"

"No, you four-eyed git," chuckled Dave, his cheeks turning all rosy. "This isn't a software piracy game, it's about real piracy - you know, the Seven Seas, yo-ho-ho and all that."

"Really?" I replied, already thinking of fab gag possibilities involving a clever and rather sordid interpretation of the phrase "Shiver my timbers". "But didn't MicroProse release a similar game a few years back entitled merely 'Pirates'?"

"Yes," explained the Fat Controller, "and although the game plays almost identically, there are tonnes of radical enhancements. Or so it says here."

"So you begin life as an apprentice captain aboard a small boat with the intention of making as much money as possible and retiring a rich and respected man, much like in the first game?" I asked.

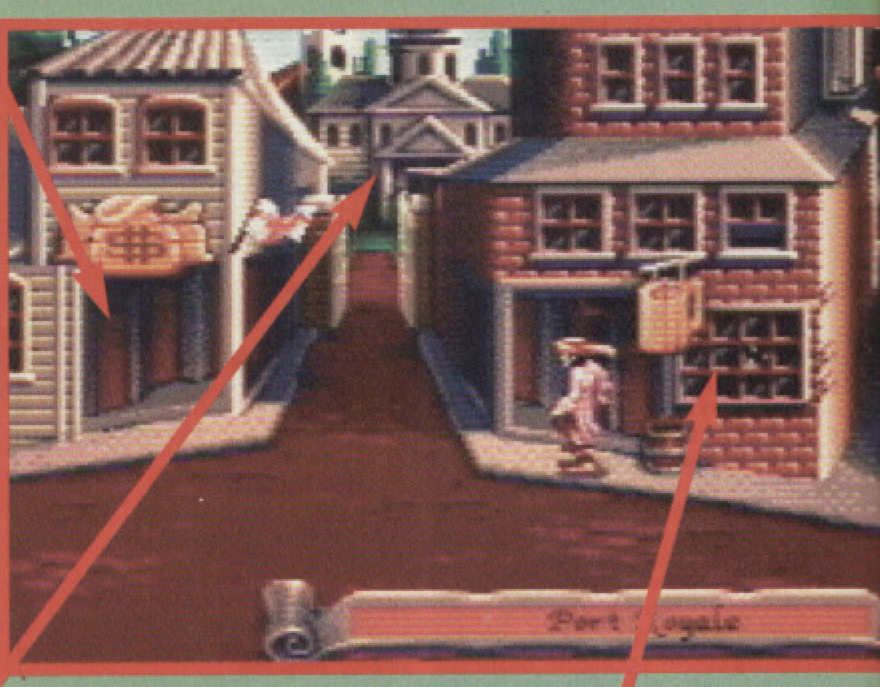
"That's right," retorted Dave, "there's no game structure as such, you're free to do almost whatever you want. But you must be careful - the world was a hazardous place back then. Many dangers lurk around every corner. Which is why you must review it - I'm too much of a girly for this kind of thing. Have it on my desk by twelve."

"Er, okay."

WE GO THERE...

...We do that. Yes, once you've successfully managed to sneak in there are plenty of things do in the towns of the Caribbean (which, as you've probably guessed, all look the same). By moving your little bloke into one of the several buildings you can trade, recruit men and buy information, as shown here...



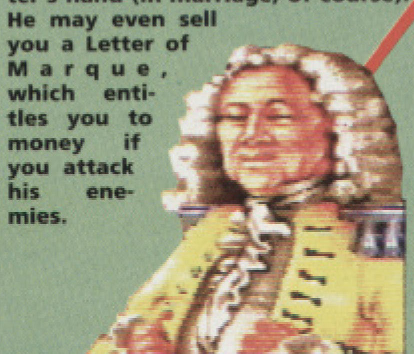


BANK

At the bank you have the option to divide your treasure with the crew. Obviously you'll have more money if you've got a small crew, so it's worth forcing some of your crew members to desert before you split up the plunder. Your share of the loot is hidden in your secret treasure cave for when you retire.

GOVERNOR

Each town has a Governor (all of whom - yes! - look the same) and if your country isn't at war with his then he'll agree to see you and maybe even offer you his daughter's hand (in marriage, of course). He may even sell you a Letter of Marque, which entitles you to money if you attack his enemies.



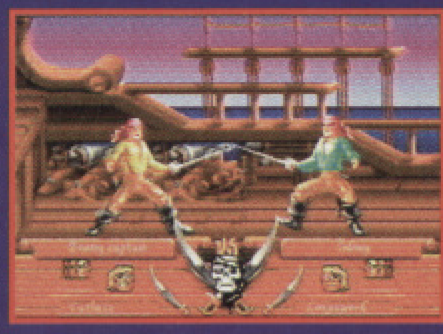
PUB

Down the Dog & Duck or whatever the town's pub is called you can chat with the locals and maybe enlist their help. You can also buy information from some of the more seedy types (which generally turns out to be not that useful) or part of a treasure map detailing the location of a box of bounty.





If you encounter another ship you'll be given the option to fight it, hail it for news or simply leave it alone. The best thing to do is challenge it to a fight by spilling its pint and getting off with its girl. Once a fight has begun, both ships have to circle each other, occasionally letting off a few shots with their cannons. You can continue like this for as long as you like, but the best thing to do is crash the ships into each other and have a ruck with the opposing captain.



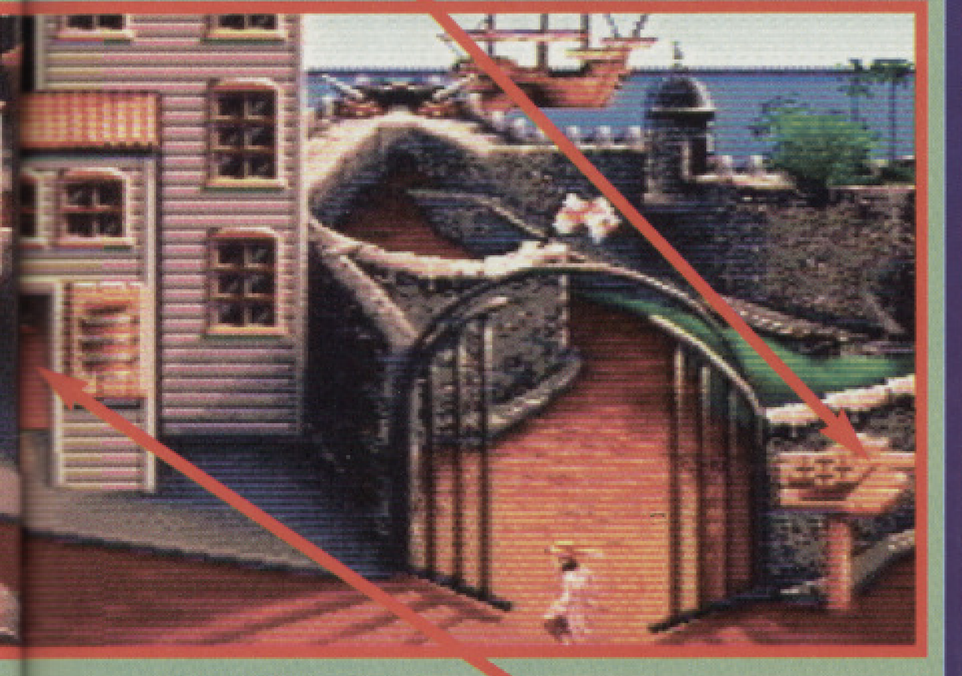
One-on-one combat plays an important part in the game. After choosing your weapon (there are three available), you need to force the captain to surrender by hitting him a lot thus gaining control of his ship. Morale places an important part - if you storm his ship with a million men to attack both of his, he's not going to take much persuading. Of course, this works the other way, so weigh up every situation before you commit yourself to a fight.



You can either enter towns peacefully or attack them, depending on your mood. There are two stages to an assault on a town and this is the first. It's much like fighting another ship except that the town doesn't move (obviously). Once you've exchanged a few shots you can approach the fortress on foot and fight off one of the hardest men from the town. Defeat him and the town's gold and provisions are yours.

SHIPYARD

The Shipwright will do anything for money as long as it involves repairing your damaged ships. He'll also buy any excess cannons or vessels surplus to your requirements.



MERCHANT

Trading may not be one of the more glamorous aspects of pirating, but it's extremely handy for selling off all the goods you've managed to steal from other ships for a profit. You can also buy provisions if you haven't managed to nick any, essential for keeping the crew fed and happy. After all, you don't want a mutiny on your hands, do you?

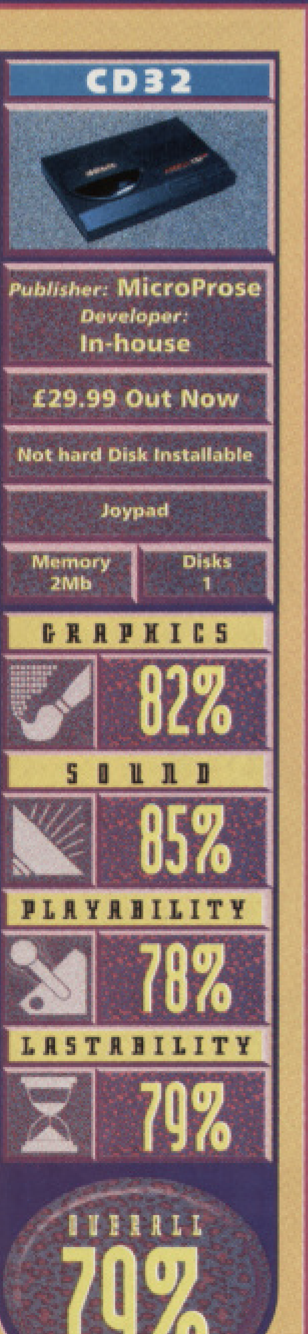


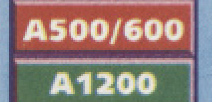


Much of your time will be spent staring at this screen as you direct your ship to its next destination. From time to time you'll come across other ships but, apart from those, the only other hazards you'll encounter are shoals and storms. Shoals can tear through the bottom of ships and sink them, so you're better off going out of your way to avoid them, while storms can blow you off course.

THE VERDICT

I loved Pirates! when it was originally released but that was over two years' ago. Pirates! Gold, although tarted up quite nicely, looks and feels like an old game by today's standards. When you consider that the CD32 is meant to be the future of gaming, this has to be a bit of a bad thing. Sure, it looks pretty and the sound is gorgeous, but a few more of those 'enhancements' wouldn't have gone a miss. For instance, the flick screen nature of the sea battles is a bit out of date - where's the smooth scrolling, eh? Why do all the towns look the same? With the massive storage capability of CDs, you would have thought that a few more visually different locations could have been supplied. And what about the sword fighting sub-game? Why wasn't that speeded up a bit? You can't tell me that the CD32 is stretched to its limits by any part of the game, so as a CD game it's disappointing. But if you overlook the fact that Pirates! Gold isn't ground-breaking stuff and accept that there are a few dodgy areas, with perseverance you can have an entertaining time - in the short term, at least. This is the perfect game to dip in and out of because the sub-games can become a bit repetitive and there are periods where not a lot happens, but if you play for an hour or so at a time then it's all just about bearable. I'm not going to advise anyone to rush about and snap this up because it falls way short of falling in the 'must buy' category, so let's just finish by saying this: I quite like it. And you will too.





It's unlikely that Pirates! Gold will be released for either the A500 or A1200, but the original Pirates! is now available on budget and apart from the flashier graphics and CD quality sound it's identical in every way. Except, of course, it's a lot cheaper.

MAELSTROM

Matt Broughton has trouble just operating a washing machine, so he wasn't overjoyed to be running an entire planet in the shiny new strategy game from Empire.



(Above) Maelstrom is split into four main divisions or services; SIN (the secret intelligence boys); Research and Development; Mining and Military. At the military screen you can buy bigger and better ships and more powerful weapons. Remember all your good intentions will count for nothing if your fleet isn't strong enough to defend your planet.

Harmony is a small planet. They mine, they sing songs and everybody loves each other gently on a regular basis. Yes it's all very harmonious and idyllic and war, well war is almost unthinkable. Besides, Harmony has a massive starfleet of just two spaceships, tiny rustbuckets that are to death and destruction what Jeremy Beadle is to cheery popularity.

In Maelstrom you are dumped in charge of everything on the planet Harmony. Unfortunately, it's not a good time to be the planet's ruler - the evil Syndicate Empire is threatening to invade so you must try and stop them by juggling your meagre finances to hire loyal workers, mine for valuable ore, build impressive starships, research new and horrible weapons and send agents sneaking around the galaxy to spy on your opponents.

The aim is a simple one: build up your strength so you can defend yourself and become big and powerful enough to beat back and destroy the Syndicate threat. You do this by selling the mined ore and buying new hardware and as the story evolves you must forge alliances with your neighbours, uncover plots, and hatch desperate plans that have never been hatched before. It's all highly involving and complex stuff.

There are huge space battles to be fought and secrets to be discovered. Think small and you'll be overwhelmed quicker than a nine-year-old can complete Sonic 2. Plan a long-term strategy on the other hand and you may just be in with a chance.

So take the situation by the scuff of the neck, shake it about a bit in an aggressive manner and immerse yourself in this galactic domination simulation.



(Above) The animated sequences add a badly needed touch of style to what is a very dull looking game. Here, my relentless digging near the old lake has uncovered what appears to be a derelict spaceship.



Maelstrom features plenty of sub-plots, like this abduction of an eminent scientist (shown from a security camera), but you don't have to get involved if you don't want to. I didn't.

THE VERDICT

I'd love to be able to tell you that deep, deep down under the surface of this bland little game there lurks a terrific strategic challenge just waiting to leap out. I'd also love to be able to take you aside and whisper that Maelstrom is hugely absorbing and even more fun than a two week trip to Disneyworld. I'd love to say all these things but unfortunately I can't because they wouldn't be true. It's not that the Maelstrom concept is a bad one, just that the graphics and the gameplay are so incredibly dull that you're only going to be drawn to this game if you're a complete strategy addict. The programming team have tried to jazz it all up by including a few nicely-drawn animation scenes but these are so small (a tiny quarter screen window) and so few and far between they're almost not worth the effort. As for the game's promised 'interactivity' I didn't come across hardly any. The first time I loaded Maelstrom up I played it for two hours and soon found that I really couldn't be bothered to 'Insert disk 2' any more. I sat and read the paper, made myself a coffee and tried to do anything that was even mildly exciting. I know this sounds harsh but the whole thing is soooo slow. There were also a few completely unexplained crashes which tended to ruin things completely. On the whole Maelstrom is very disappointing. If you fancy a bit of galactic wheeler-dealing then stick to Frontier or if you're very patient and trusting why not hang around for MicroProse's Starlord. At least that's got 3D bits.

A500/600

Publisher: Empire
Developer: PAS Systems

£TBA Out Now

Hard Disk Installable

Mouse

Memory 1Mb | Disks 6

GRAPHICS	60%
SOUND	45%
PLAYABILITY	69%
LASTABILITY	66%
OVERALL	60%

A1200 **CD32**

Well, all you lucky A1200 owners are in for a treat. Maelstrom runs a tiny bit faster. Yep, that's it. It's painfully slow on the A600 but playable as long as you've got a good book to read. As for a CD32 version, what's the point?


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CAMPAIG

"Tanks for the memory," says David Upchurch as he thinks of a rather poor way to introduce Empire's latest combat sim.

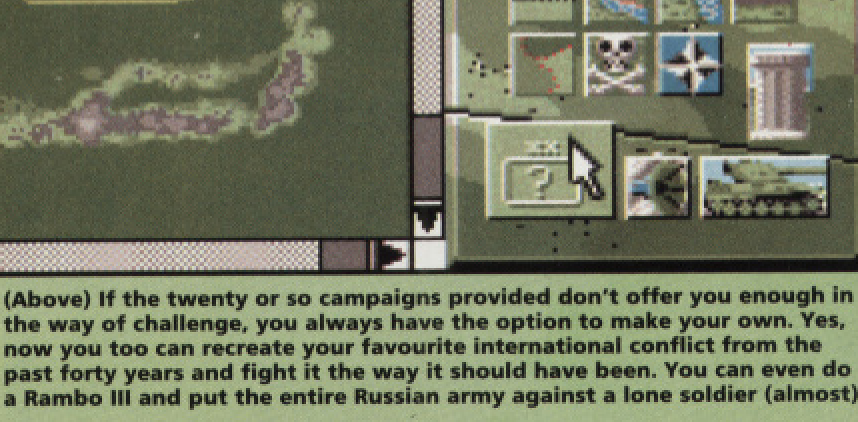
Those who constantly go on about the Second World War whenever England is even marginally involved in an international conflict with Europe are as irritating as finding out your only vinyl copy of Gary Moore's Back On The Streets has a huge scratch on it just before the amazing guitar solo in the middle.

All that 'Tally-ho chaps' and 'Bally Hun's coming over the briny' rubbish is as out of date as a 1962 yogurt so I'm pleased to report that there's none of that nonsense with Campaign II. There are also a lot of other things which aren't in Campaign II like Sherbert Dib-Dabs and Flip-Flops, but we're not here to talk about those, are we? Let's concentrate on specifics.

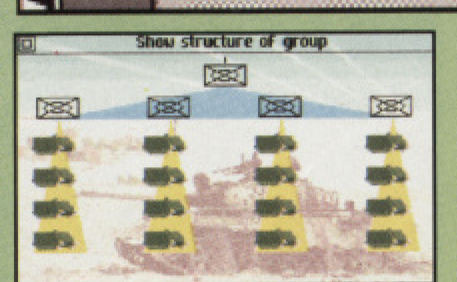
For his second Campaign game, Jonathan Griffiths has gone for scenarios from the Korean War to the present day, meaning that apart from tanks on the battlefield, you've now got aerial support with (player-controlled) helicopters, missiles, laser rangefinders and everything else that the modern soldier boy (or girl - God I hate these politically correct times) wouldn't be seen dead without (or possibly would be seen dead without, if you follow me).

At the heart of Campaign II is quite an in-depth strategy game, which boasts the expertise of a real-life military consultant (those old professor-types that speak authoritatively on news shows throughout any major conflict, despite having absolutely no contact with the military whatsoever). This is likely to be overlooked, though, in the rush to climb aboard the 3D fighting section in which you can control tanks, armed jeeps, helicopters and infantry.

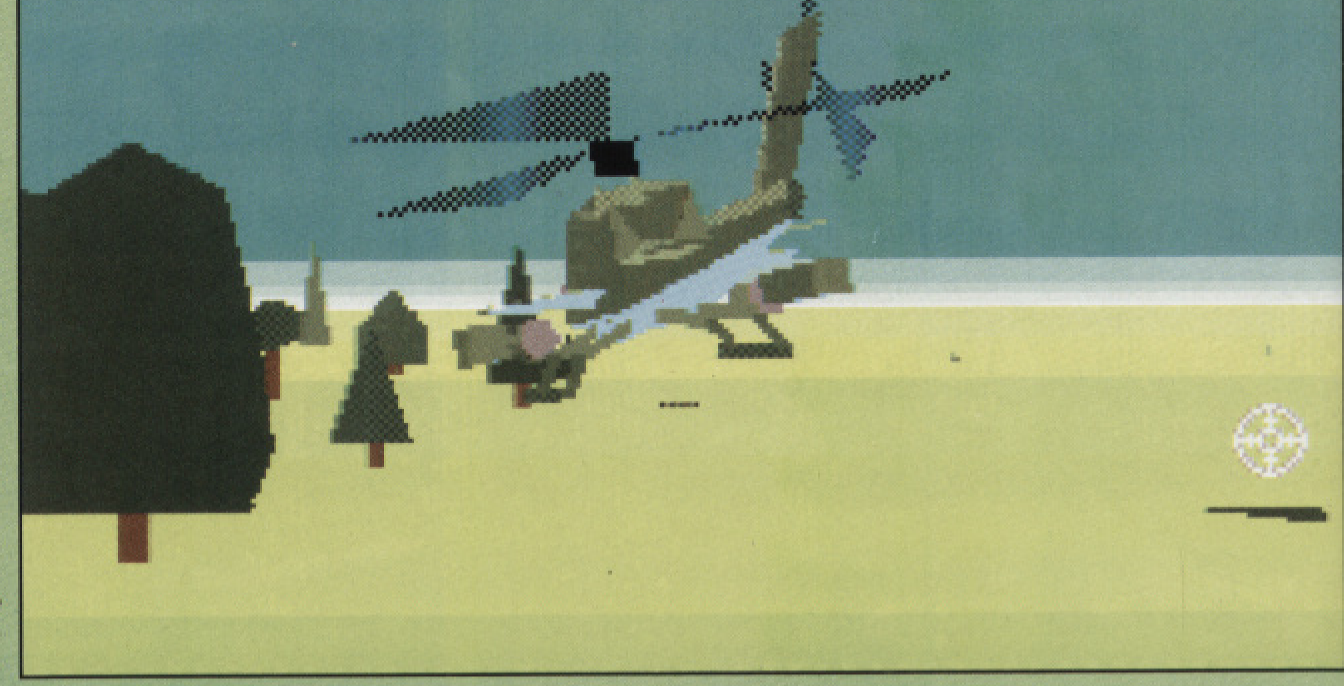
There's also a campaign editor to play with, which allows you to create any battle you care to imagine - just the thing for that busy military dictator who wants to see if his latest plan for total world domination will work but doesn't have any advisors left because he's just shot the last one for suggesting that the troops wear sensible combat colours instead of the 'I Luv My Leader' t-shirts with pictures of his face on them.



(Above) If the twenty or so campaigns provided don't offer you enough in the way of challenge, you always have the option to make your own. Yes, now you too can recreate your favourite international conflict from the past forty years and fight it the way it should have been. You can even do a Rambo III and put the entire Russian army against a lone soldier (almost).



(Left) To get an idea of how your forces are laid out, these tree diagrams show who commands what. The symbols indicate different types of troops and you can zoom right down to each individual tank if you wish. Once you get the hang of things you'll not need to visit this screen too often but it was nice of the programmer to include it in the first place.



Although the first Campaign allowed you to call in air strikes, this time you can get to control them from within the cockpit. Helicopters cover a great deal of distance quickly but have the rather nasty tendancy to crash when anything as small as a pebble hits them. Great fun to fly, but not really that practical.

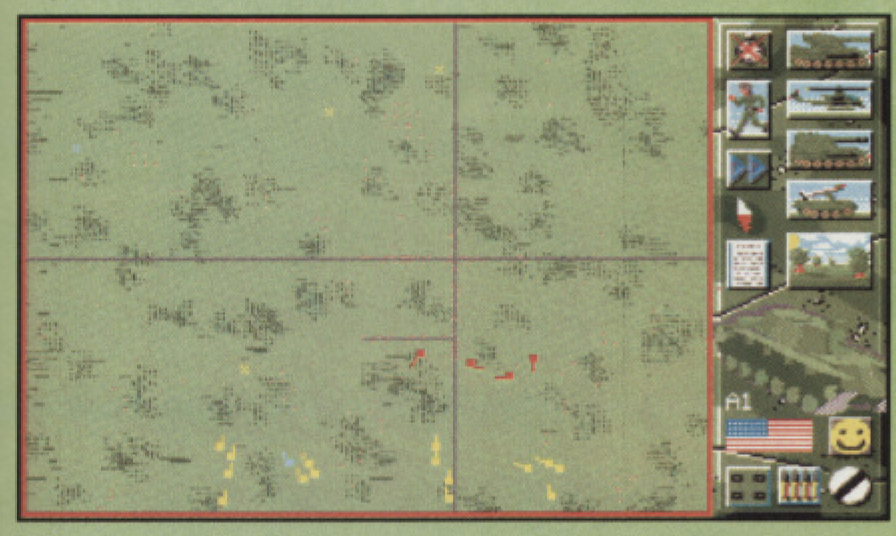
N 2

Whenever two units meet, a battle commences. You can opt to let the computer play it all automatically, but jumping in to the front seat of an M1 Abrahms is where the fun is. The 3D for this bit isn't the most smoothly updated or the quickest every seen but it's more than adequate and does its job well. You can also drive APCs, jeeps, missile launchers and choppers

(Below) The crux of the strategy element takes place on this screen. The map shows local places of interest and any enemy that are currently visible to your forces. Your troops are shown in yellow, the enemy are red and the currently selected one is blue. Each unit has a different symbol depending on what they are.



(Below) If actual front seat driving doesn't take your fancy you could always play a skirmish from the battle table. Similar to before, your troops are yellow and blue, while the enemey's are red. Set waypoints, bring in reinforcements, watch your men die, write the letters to their loved ones... Hey, no one ever said war was fun.



(Below)There are six classic scenarios for you to try out - the Korean War, the Six Day War, Yom Kippur, Vietnam, Iran vs. Iraq and Desert Storm. Each have been thoroughly researched so that all the troop statistics are as accurate as the real thing.



A500/600

Publisher: Empire
Developer: Jonathan Griffiths
£34.99 Out Now
Hard Disk Installable
Joystick/Mouse/Keyboard
Memory 512Mb
Disks 2

GRAPHICS	75%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	82%
LASTABILITY	81%
OVERALL	80%

THE VERDICT

I hate big involving strategy games because I never know where to start the Verdict. I could start by saying that Campaign II is big, involving and has all the attraction factor of a rottweiler (i.e. it isn't very pretty to look at and you wouldn't necessarily want to go near it, but once it's got its teeth in you it's not going to let go without being shot through the head). Or perhaps I might begin by describing in detail how unattractive to look at the front end is. Or I could mention its lack of user-friendliness and how there's no real feeling of togetherness about it all. It might, however, be best to kick off by diving straight into the arcade combat section as this is what most of you would want to know about. Describing its fairly standard 3D and tricky control method but quite engaging gameplay may be just the way to begin. But I won't do that because it's predictable and the last thing I'd want is to be called that. Instead, my opening could read something like 'The best part of Campaign II is that the campaign editor allows you to develop just about any combat scenario which ensures that you should never become bored with the game'. I might even start by saying something poncey like 'Any wargame that comes with a glossy booklet of war pictures is asking for trouble. Games shouldn't be glorifing war, they should be condemning it'. I won't, though, because I don't believe that. I think that the best way to start, though, would be to might say... Oh. Damn. I've run out of room.

A1200
CD32

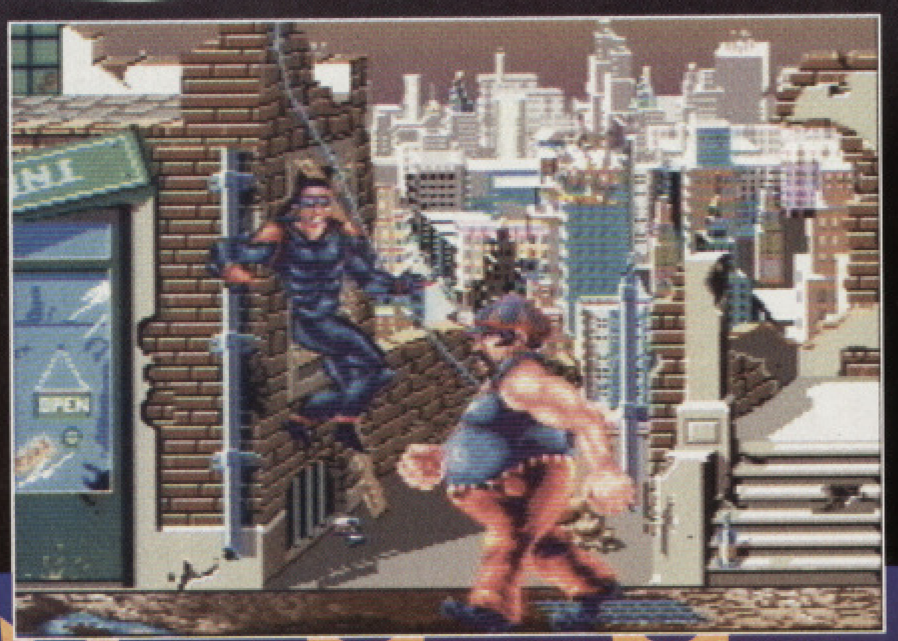
There are plans for a CD32 version but nothing has been finalised yet. The A1200 version (due for January) will feature better graphics and sound, will run faster and will have all the usual enhancements an A1200 can offer.

(Right) Obviously the developers operate some form of charity and allow sad types with no drawing experience to create the sprites for them. Either that or the person who created the game's visuals had his eyes closed. You have to see the fighters moving to appreciate how awful it all is.



DANGEROUS STREETS

If you buy a new CD32 then you'll get this game for free. Which is still asking too much, reckons Simon Byron.



One curious option included within the game is the ability to increase or decrease your character's speed by pressing the uppermost buttons on the joypad. Considering that Dangerous Streets allows no opportunity for developing any tactics - mainly thanks to the jerky nature of the sprites - the only slightly advantageous by-product of doing this is to make the fighters look even stupider than they did previously. And then you can laugh at the amount of money this game cost you. Ha!

Every beat-'em-up needs a hard soundtrack to drive the action on. Dangerous Streets, thankfully, has no action whatsoever so the Classic FM-style tunes that emanate from the speakers suit it perfectly. The sound effects are crap as well. As you fight a few moments of white noise accompany your blows and every now and again someone will shout "Xcdwehjewkln!" which, one presumes, is a badly-sampled battle cry. Either turn down the volume or remove your ears is my advice.



Picture the scene: It's Little Johnny's birthday and he's too excited to sleep. After several hours of tossing and turning he decides to brave the wrath of his parents. Tip-toeing into their room, he places a cold hand on his mother's shoulder and gently shakes her, gradually waking her from her peaceful slumber. "Morning, love," she murmurs, a smile creeping from ear to ear, "happy birthday."

The parcel is impressively large and Little Johnny immediately guesses its contents: a CD32 - exactly what he'd requested. Tearing the gift wrapping apart and faking his surprise he turns to his mother and hugs her, tears streaming from his face. "Thanks mum," he grins, "it's just what I wanted."

Not stopping to read the instructions he sprints downstairs and begins setting up his brand new home entertainment system, barely able to contain his growing excitement. Behind him, his mother appears bearing yet another, smaller present. "Here, I thought you'd like this to play on it," she whispers, planting a kiss on Little Johnny's forehead.

Removing the bow, a tear trickling down his cheek, Johnny turns to his mother. "But you said money was tight and not to expect much this year," he says.

"I know," comes the reply, "I had to sell your younger sister to some foreigners to raise the cash, but your happiness means more to me than your sister obviously did."

The second gift is a CD case which Little Johnny wastes no time in opening. "Thanks mum," he repeats as he slowly lifts the lid. It's now that the smell hits him as the freshly laid turd is revealed. "What's this?" retches Little Johnny.

"The nice man down the computer shop told me that this is the future of entertainment. It's a 'beat them up' game, whatever that is, called Dangerous Streets. It's on CD so it must be good."

Inserting the turd into the tray and switching the machine on, Little Johnny begins to bawl as the awfulness of the game is revealed. "You cow," he screeches at his mother, "you bloody cow."

As Little Johnny digs out his old Atari VCS and begins to seek out some proper games, his mother removes her belt and constructs a makeshift noose. "I'm sorry," she cries, wrapping the belt around her neck, "I'm so sorry..."



No, this isn't another of our regular production cock-ups, but an indication of the ridiculous way that one fighter can be edged off-screen. It's not rare to be able to force your opponent into a corner and lash out at what looks like a disembodied leg and arm. The reason for these disappearing torsos isn't detailed in the manual but reports suggests that they vanish to the place where the gameplay resides.



If there's someone you really hate then invite them round for an excitement-filled two-player game in which you can both hold down the fire buttons for long periods of time - just the thing for whiling away thirty seconds or so before you both adjourn to do something just a little bit more interesting. Like making anagrams of the word 'An'.



In a one-player game, Dangerous Streets takes the form of most modern beat-'em-ups so you'll not be surprised to discover that the objective is to beat up all the other computer-controlled characters. Your opponents are selected at random and all have special attributes and methods of attack. Except they don't - just hold the red button down all the time and you'll not go far wrong.

THE VERDICT

Last issue I had a bit of a chin-wag with Commodore's David Pleasance who revealed his hopes for the CD32 and its software support. His sales figures certainly sounded impressive and with a new software bundle in the pipeline (as it was back then) things could only get better. Or so he thought. Now the bundle has been revealed (this and Wing Commander are the two new additions to Diggers and Oscar) I'd like a few things clarified. Firstly, why is a pile of crap like Dangerous Streets associated with the supposed future of gaming? Secondly, who at Flair decided that Dangerous Streets deserves an A1200 release? And thirdly, how comes someone as talentless as the people behind this dire release are employed? There must come a time in a game's development when the coder has done all he can and hands it to someone else (the publisher, presumably) for their opinion. The person who stamped 'Passed' on this release obviously didn't spend anything more than a couple of seconds trying to find the gameplay which is so blatantly missing. Why did this game even make it past initial conception? It's just completely unplayable. The CD32 joypad may not be the easiest to get to grips with, but even playing with a joystick gives the impression that you're not influencing the characters at all. You may as well be watching a demo for all the feeling of involvement you get. And correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought that the CD32 was capable of amazing things when it comes to animating sprites. So would someone please tell me why all the fighters are so badly drawn and have less animation frames than the stick men you draw on the corners of a two-page exercise book. If by any chance you were fortunate to miss this game by buying an earlier CD32 bundle then there is obviously a God. Avoid.

CD32



Publisher: Flair
Developer: Micromania

£N/A Out Now

Not Hard Disk Installable

Joystick/ Joypad

Memory	Disks
2Mb	1(CD)

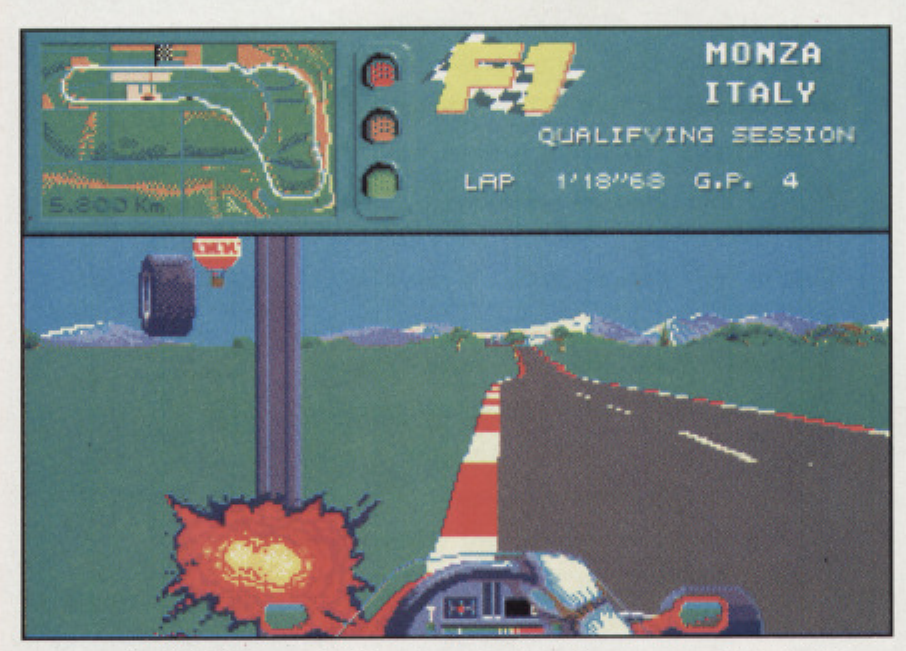
GRAPHICS	28%
SOUND	37%
PLAYABILITY	21%
LASTABILITY	25%
OVERALL	22%

A500/600
A1200

Yes, A1200 owners, for £25.99 you too can experience the sheer awfulness of Dangerous Streets but with more disk acessing! And A500 owners get all of the above but with worse graphics! I'd advise you to get a really big curry and wait until the morning after. You'll get the same amount of crap but at least it'll be cheaper.

F1

David Upchurch grows a bushy moustache and dons blue overalls and a stupid cap as he tries to emulate 'The Nigester' by playing Domark's classy racer.



As a result of all this speed, it's only natural that someone will try to take a 90° corner at 300 miles per hour. When that happens... WHOOOMP! Fortunately damage isn't permanent. Each crash puts more wear on your tyres and slows you down for a moment, but nothing more serious.

We like Nigel Mansell. He is - or rather, was - the only real British sporting hero of the last few years and any excuse to wave the flag and get all jingoistic is fine by us. Okay, so he's about as interesting as the works of Jeffrey Archer, but you can't deny that behind the wheel he's a bit of a whizz. And now you can attempt to repeat Nige's awe-inspiring success in Domark's smart F1 racing game.

You'd be forgiven for being swamped by an overwhelming sense of déjà vu when glancing at the screenshots of F1. You see, F1 is the mutant off-spring of Vroom, a rather excellent racer by French developers Lankhor that appeared in the UK a couple of years ago to universal critical praise. However, for some reason that was never very clear, it rapidly disappeared from our software shelves without ever achieving the mega-hit status it so richly deserved.

Not so in Europe, though, where Vroom was a 'roaring' (ha ha ha ha ha - Everyone) success and went on to spawn the sequel Vroom Multi-play. This was basically Vroom again but with a simultaneous two-player option added. Sadly, Vroom Multi-play never ever reached our shores... until now. Basically what Domark have done is to take Vroom Multi-play, tweak it a little here and there and cunningly retitle it F1.

So what's the deal? Well, pretty much as you'd expect - i.e. in your F1 racing car compete against computer-controlled rivals for F1 glory. On top of that there are the usual options to practice each track alone or race a one-off, as well as compete against a friend. There are few surprises to be had here, if I'm being honest, but it all plays so well and so fast that you can forgive it its lack of innovation. See you in the pits...

FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

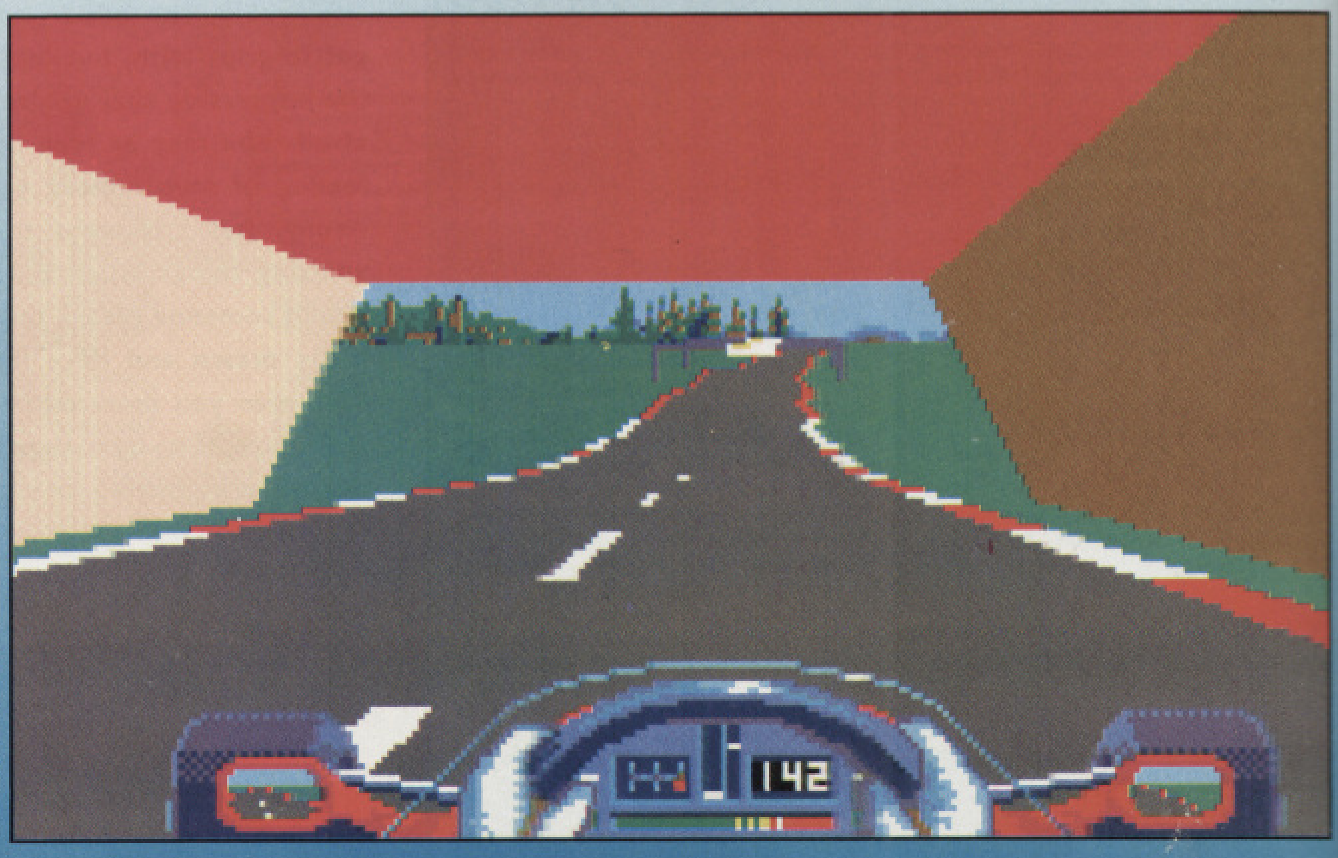
(Right) A championship season is split into two legs, six races in each, where you compete against all the top F1 names. (Where's Senna then? - A reader.). Okay, all the top names apart from Senna. (J. J. Lehto isn't there either! - That reader again.) Alright, apart from Senna and Lehto, then. (By the way, Andretti's not racing any more. - That Reader once more). Oh, why don't you shut up...

N CASE YOU WERE WONDERING...

We just thought you might be interested in knowing which keys allow Player Two to refuel and change tyres in the pits (since the manual neglects to mention them). It's a small point but it does mean that Player Two now stands a chance of finishing a race. They are:

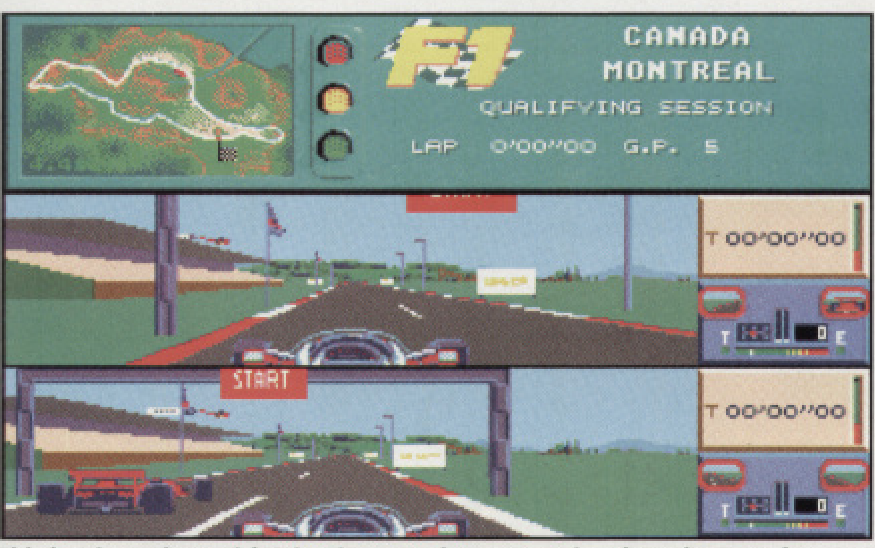
Refuel	**E**
Change Tyres	**P**

Bye now.



(Right) Accuracy was never F1's middle name and as such there are only twelve tracks to race on as opposed to the sixteen of the 'real thing'. All of the authentic features of those twelve tracks are to be found though, from the Monaco tunnel to Club Corner at Silverstone.

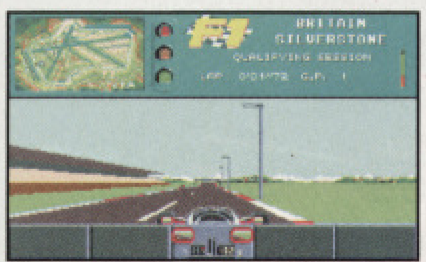




This is where the real fun is. The two-player game involves the use of a handy-dandy split-screen effect, with the cockpit instrumentation moved to the side of the screen and the two cars shown as red and orange colours in the position list. The game windows are a little tiny and cramped but they do their job well enough.



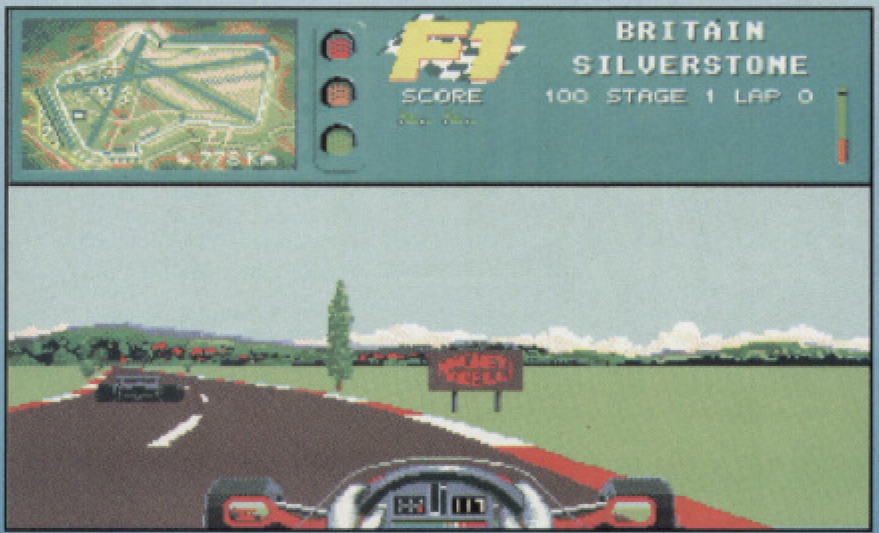
The map shows the position of your car on the track as well as alerting you to any upcoming corners. The position indicator shows your car compared to the rest of the field as well as lap times and race conditions. The main area is where you race (obviously) and the dashboard shows your speed, tyre condition, gears and rear mirrors.



Question: When is a fast game a slow game? Answer: When a fast game has a Turbo mode. Hi-thank-yaw! No but seriously, Turbo mode makes the normally fast nature of F1 look like an old lady with arthritis. By shrinking the main sprites and lopping a chunk off the bottom of the screen, the game's speed increases three-fold. Hairy.

The pit crew are always on hand to change your tyres, top up your fuel and give you free wine glasses with every six tokens. Simply come to a halt under the covered canopy and press the appropriate key to select the service you require. Then watch in misery as seven or eight opponents rapidly pass you by while your mechanic is shaking his head and saying "Well, I just can't get the parts."





As well as racing in official championships, working your way up through the league tables and so on, you can also just take to the track and go hell for leather in an arcade-style game, where all you need to worry about is overtaking a set number of cars before five laps are up.

THE VERDICT

Okay, forget simulation, forget total involvement in the illicit practices of a typical Formula One season and forget being able to turn your car around and go the wrong way around the track. F1 (or Vroom Multiplay as it used to be known) offers none of that. What it does offer is speed and it offers it with gusto. It falls neatly between the two formal categories of driving games - i.e. the simulations (à la MicroProse's Formula One) and the arcade games (à la Nigel Mansell's World Championship) - containing the polygon graphics and accurate track modelling of the former and the indestructible cars, bouncing walls and linear road movement of the latter. Any faults you may care to bring up are lost instantly in the speed that overtakes you with all the abandonment of a group of city bankers making their way home on the M25 in their XR3is after a successful day's bankrupting small nations and celebrating with several bottles of Chianti afterwards. An example of this is that playing it in normal mode is both fast and extremely difficult. Turning on the optional Turbo mode makes things bloody impossible - literally. Vroom always was a good game, where it excels now (as do so many games) is in the two-player mode. As a colleague remarked, Pitstop has finally come to the Amiga. Although the split screen isn't as large as I would have liked it, it still manages to conjure up enough excitement and competitive spirit to bring on all those cases of Pitstop Thumb that so ailed C64 gamers of yesteryear (the condition where you're gripping the stick so hard and with such intent that your thumb goes from numb to covered in blisters during the course of a single race). And any game that can end in actual bodily harm is alright in my book.

A500/600

Publisher: Domark
Developer: Lankhor

£25.99 Out Now

Not Hard Disk Installable

Joystick/Mouse

Memory 1Mb | Disks 1

GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	91%
LASTABILITY	90%
OVERALL	90%

A1200

CD32

The game runs fine on an A1200, and by pressing Caps Lock you can make the game perform as it would on an A500. In theory you'd think that this would make the game significantly slower, but in practice there's hardly any difference. No news of a CD32 version, though. Never mind, eh?



GOBLINS 3

Promising not to indulge in any obvious sexual innuendo (which makes a change), Simon Byron peruses Coktel Vision's latest.

Get out yer hankies 'cos I've got some sadder-than-sad news - Goblins 3 will be the last in the popular cartoon puzzle series from Coktel Vision (according to them, at any rate). It's probably just as well that there isn't going to be a fourth, actually. Not because the games aren't any good, I hasten to add, it's just that the first game was called Gobliiins, the second was Gobliins and the latest is called Goblins. If there was a fourth we'd just run out of i's and, let's face it, Goblns doesn't make any sense.

Okay, not the greatest joke in the world, but when you write as many reviews per day as I seem to it's hard to keep coming up with dynamite opening paragraphs. Now that that's been taken care of let me tell you a little bit about the game (frantic sound of desperate reviewer trying to find the box in order to copy the blurb).

You play the part of Blount, a hard-working journalist (a contradiction in terms if ever there was one) for the Goblin News. Your latest assignment is to gain an interview with the leaders of two opposing goblin factions, both of whom are trying to find a way through the Foliander Maze. Legend has it that the heart of the maze contains the fabulous Jewel Of The World and with it, one side could crush the other.

Naturally things don't go quite as you planned and before the game is through you'll find yourself confronting both rulers as well as negotiating the maze itself. Oh, and you become a werewolf (or weregoblin, if you will) as well. Ain't life funny sometimes?

Pull on the loop. Hit the bottle containing Chump with the golf club.
Take the plunger from the box. Use it on Chump. Unscrew the hook using the coin. Place the hook on the loop. Have Chump lift the weight and then, take the umbrella. Go on the hand and place Chump on the flagstone. Pick up the shark tooth. Go into the barrel.
Put the umbrella in the opening.
Using the tooth, cut the rope.

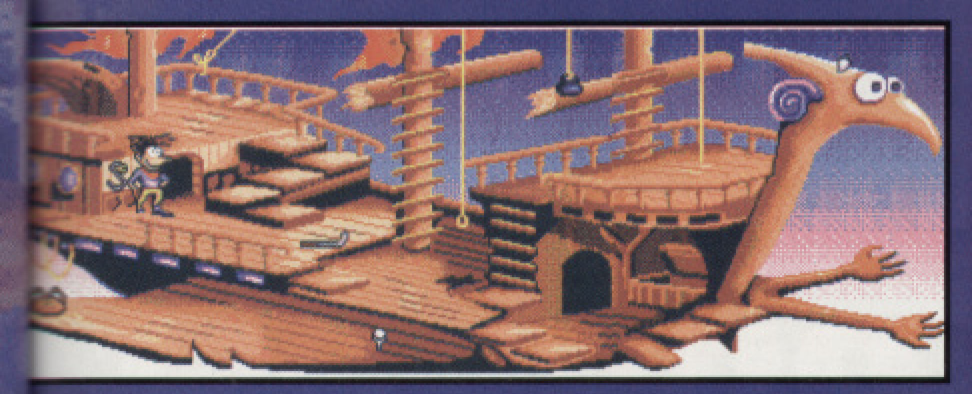


(Far left) You have a limited number of 'jokers' at your disposal. Unlike 'It's A Knockout' these don't double your score for the upcoming round, but instead allow you to take a peek at the current level's solution in case you're stuck. This isn't quite as attractive an option as it sounds, because it takes bloody ages for the disk to access the hint screen - disk accessing is a big headache throughout the game.

(Below) The player interface is a simplified version of the standard point-'n'-click system used in most graphic adventures. It's all context sensitive, so by clicking on an item with the left mouse button you can use it or pick it up if it's lying about loose, while clicking with the right button brings up your inventory allowing you to select objects that can then be used on other objects on the screen.







(Above) Your adventures start here on this flying ship. The crew have abandoned the vessel after a particularly vicious rock storm (that's what it says here, anyway) and it's up to you to find a way down to ground level. Each stage is self contained, and you can't progress to the next location until you've solved all the puzzles on the current screen, so there's no Monkey Island-style wandering around from place to place.

(Below) Although Blount starts his quest alone, it's not long before he meets up with other friendly and not-so-friendly characters who can be called upon to help him solve the puzzles. These supporting characters can't carry items or use objects on other objects, but they each have certain talents and it's up to you to work out how these can be used to their best effect.





This map screen shows your progress and how much further you've got to go before you can phone up all your friends and announce that you've completed the game. (To which their reply will no doubt be "So what?") You're unlikely to call upon this map as much as you might because of the age you have to wait for it to appear.



Blount and his chums can't be killed no matter how dangerous the situation, so you can try the most outlandish potential solutions to problems safe in the knowledge that the worst that'll happen is that you'll have to endure some painfully unfunny 'You can't do this' animation. Laugh? I didn't.

THE VERDICT

"TURN OFF THAT SODDING MUSIC!!!!!" A trifle strong, you might think, but such words were thrown in my direction more than once during the course of reviewing this game. It's that tinkerty-tonk stuff, you see, the kind of music (or muzak) heard in elevators or public toilets or from IBM PCs without soundcards. It's the kind of music that makes it's way to Number One in the hit parade (as I believe you youngsters call it) at Christmas. It infects your mind, it rots your brain and it causes computer repair shops to overdose on smashed monitor reconstructions. Auditory recriminations aside, Goblins 3 (with or without the surplus 'i's) is a fine comic adventure romp. Its strengths are in the clever construction of the puzzles and the way they mesh perfectly with the storyline. They are, of course, superbly helped by the animations and general cartoony-ness (when you can't find a word to describe the situation, make one up say I) of the characters. Clever as the puzzles are, the majority of which require the use of more than one character, they still fall into the trap of being slightly obscure. Not as much as the second Goblins game was (there are no 'Hit The Chicken With A Bread Stick To Make It Give You A Shield'-type posers), but they do have a tendency to produce comments like "Oh that's just stupid" rather than "Oh very clever", in the same way that the Titanic had a tendency to drift towards icebergs rather than clear, empty waters. Still, Goblins 3 should appeal to many. It's a shame that there aren't to be any more as it appears that Coktel Vision's diminutive friends have finally started to find their way. With that in mind I suggest Goblins 3 takes a place on your software shelf by way of a farewell toast to the series.

A500/600

Publisher: Coktel Vision
Developer: In-house

£34.99 Out Now

Hard Disk Installable

Mouse

Memory 1Mb | Disks 6

GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	45%
PLAYABILITY	82%
LASTABILITY	80%
OVERALL	80%

A1200 **CD32**

On the A1200 the game runs slightly fasters, although not in the disk accessing department which is where some sort of improvement is sorely needed. Coktel Vision aren't ruling out an enhanced version of Goblins 3 for everyone's favourite CD-based machine with Commodore on it, but there aren't any immediate plans.

CASTLES 2 Siege & Conquest

Interplay dips its corporate toe in the CD32 games market with this medieval strategy offering. David Upchurch sucks it and sees what it's like (the game, that is - not the toe).

Now that most Britons jet off to exotic foreign locations for their summer vacations, I fear that we're in danger of losing forever an ancient and deeply-loved holiday tradition - the art of building sand castles.

Admittedly, it's an art that grew from desperation. After all, on British beaches there's precious little else for the kids to do - unless they fancy risking getting a mouth full of sewage swimming in the sea, or suffering a severed tendon from treading on a broken bottle while exploring a manky, litter-filled rock pool.

Kids today don't know what they're missing. Even now I can clearly recall sitting on Great Yarmouth beach, valiantly trying to create my own mini-version of Camelot as rain lashed down from the heavens, my mum and dad proudly watching me, huddled shivering behind a woefully-inadequate wind breaker. I suppose it was all a bit futile at the end of the day - if the gangs of scrawny boys terrorising the sun worshippers didn't kick it in the tide would destroy it eventually. But I had fun. Sort of.

But with Interplay's Castles 2: Siege & Conquest, I can happily return to those pleasant days of building turrets and moats without having to endure sand in my ice cream or peeling skin on my back, and what's more, I can even get involved in a bit of medieval empire building to boot. What more could you ask for? Er, yes, thought you might say that...

Anyway, Castles 2 is essentially a strategy game. The King, it seems, is dead, and with no heir to replace him the kingdom has been thrown into violent turmoil as various power-hungry noblemen compete for the throne. As one of these megalomaniacal types it's your task to accumulate land, wealth and men until you can eventually persuade the Pope that you're a worthy successor to the late, great monarch.

Naturally, such an ambitious aspiration brings you into conflict with your rivals, which is where the castles come in, providing much-needed protection from the enemy hordes for the various territories in your realm. The neat thing is you actually get to design each castle's layout, and your skill at creating mighty fortifications soon becomes as important as your tactical prowess.

I had fun. Sort of. And you can find out just how much fun in The Verdict just across the way.

BUILDING CASTLES IN THE AIR...

In the old days, building a castle was a huge feat requiring much toil. For you, however, it takes no more than a few pointer clicks. That's progress for you. However, before you even think of building your dream home you've got to achieve sufficient reserves of gold, timber, iron and food. Then, assuming you've got some Administrative muscle to spare, you simply select a territory and click...





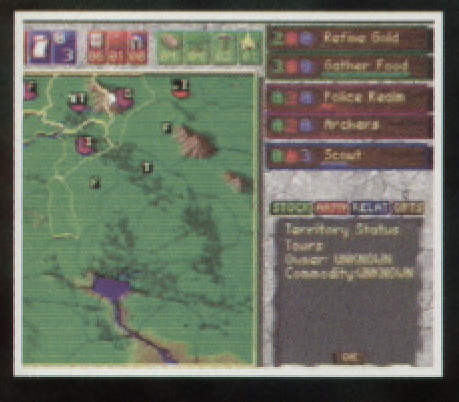
Scrolling around the landscape you can scout out a likely building site and then, when you've found somewhere nice, you can plonk your flag down. This indicates where your keep, the castle's nerve centre, will be built. Now, using the menu, you get to place towers and walls around it. This is more difficult than it need because of the fiddly nature of the CD32's joypad.



Once you're happy with your castle design you can return to the main menu and set your men to work actually building it. The bigger and more elaborate your castle the more effective it'll be at keeping the local peasants in check and repelling an enemy's attack, but bear in mind it'll also take longer to build and eat up more of your precious resources. So don't get too carried away.



The land of Bretagne is divided up into 36 territories, some of which are ruled by other nobles and others which are neutral and ripe for the taking. Each territory produces one of four types of resource - either food, timber, iron or gold - and you'll need a healthy supply of each to win. As you start the game with just one territory (and thus one type of resource) you'd better start expanding your empire NOW.



Your decision making is split between three main areas: Admin, which governs gathering resources and castle building; Military, which controls recruitment, attacks on other lands, etc; and Political, which deals with alliances and so on. Each area has a limited number of 'task points' that can be spent in it, and it's up to you how you divide them out - the more points you spend, the faster a task will be completed. As your empire grows, you'll be rewarded with more points, allowing you to carry out even more tasks.

You can either settle the outcome of battles statistically or direct the troops yourself, although it's hardly worth bothering - the orders you give amount to little more than telling your boys to attack or retreat. Your first rucks will probably look much like this, i.e. sad, but things become more interesting later on when you get to lay siege to enemy castles with ballistas and catapults.





Every so often you'll receive messengers from the Pope or rival nobles asking for gold in return for friendship. While you can happily tell the nobles to sod off, you've got to be a bit more careful with the Pope - displease him too much and you might get excommunicated, and as the Pope's the one who decides who'll be king this is not a good thing.

(Below) An extra complication which can turned off if you don't want the hassle is the 'plots' option, where you'll be informed of intrigues that have occurred that you can act on. Your judgments then lead on to other events, good or bad, which will affect your progress in the game. If anything really big happens you'll often get treated to a grainy, blurry, so-indistinct-it's-unrecognisable digitised animation - thankfully these can be turned off.





THE VERDICT

Coming soon after the likes of Liberation and Microcosm, games which seriously raised my hopes of what I could expect from a CD32 title, Castles 2 brought me back down to earth with a bump. Apart from the nice intro (in which the 'story so far' is related by a narrator to the accompaniment of a stirring soundtrack and a graphics slideshow) and the occasional digitised footage illustrating certain key events, there's nothing on show here that would lead you to believe this was running on a 32-bit machine. The graphics are, how shall I put this, 'functional' at best, becoming downright awful in the combat scenes, and the tunes running throughout are bog-standard 'medieval' fare. It's all so slow too, with the screen update being quite painful at times, making a game that'd be classed 'turgid' at the best of times even more so. But... But... But... Despite these failings I actually found Castles 2 quite engrossing. Yes, it looks as attractive as a plate of whelks. Yes, it's got as much action and excitement as Songs of Praise. But all these things are forgotten once you start consuming enemy lands, your realm starts growing and the goal of becoming king becomes an ever more realistic possibility. Add to that the occasional random 'plots' that arise and you've got a surprisingly atmospheric experience. It's only when you finish for the day and go to save your game that Castles 2's killer fault comes to light - you can't save unless you've got an external floppy disk drive! Aaaiieee! Since none are available yet, this means you've either got to play on until you win or lose - and this is not the sort of game you can realistically hope to finish in a couple of hours - or leave it on pause until you next decide to play, with your CD32 guzzling electricity. Oh dear. And I was all set to mark this reasonably highly too...

CD32

Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Almathera

£TBA Out Now

N/A

Joypsd / Mouse

Memory 2Mb | Disks 1 (CD)

GRAPHICS 61%

SOUND 65%

PLAYABILITY 75%

LASTABILITY 40%

OVERALL 54%

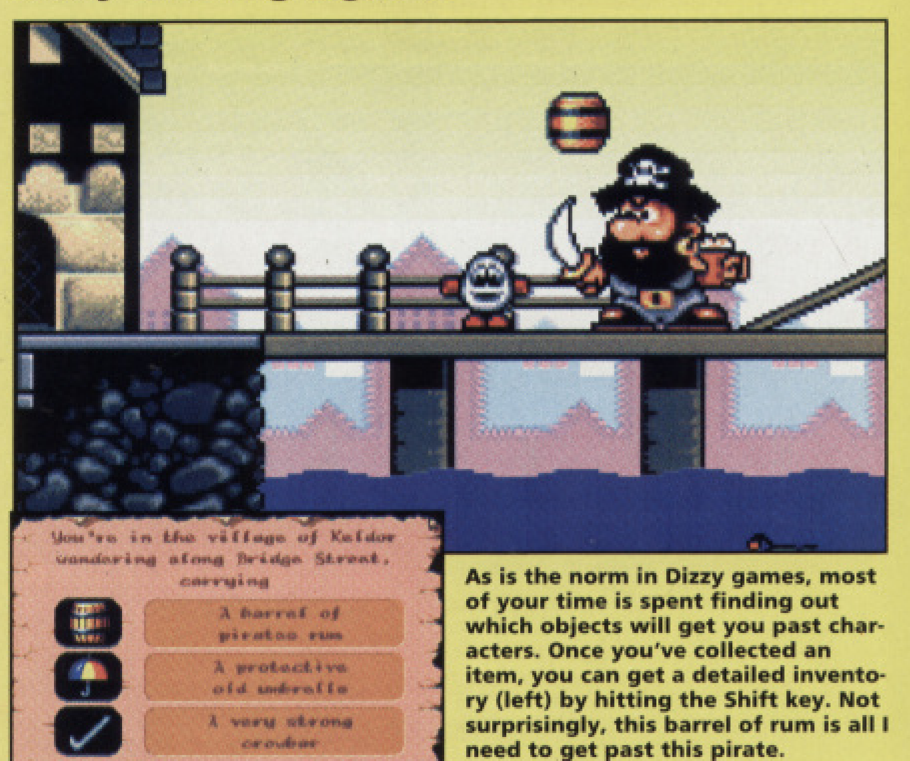
A500/600
A1200

We 'phoned Interplay but they weren't in, so we've no idea what the latest news on a 'normal' version of Castles 2 is. However, we know that a hard disk-only version *does* exist, although whether it'll ever be released is unknown at the moment.



FANTASTIC DIZZY

Matt Broughton collects item A and gives it to character B with Codemasters' latest Dizzy offering (again).



As is the norm in Dizzy games, most of your time is spent finding out which objects will get you past characters. Once you've collected an item, you can get a detailed inventory (left) by hitting the Shift key. Not surprisingly, this barrel of rum is all I need to get past this pirate.

We've had Zool shoved down our throats for a while now, along with James Pond and a few other pretenders, but if you stop and think about it for a moment, who better to be Commodore's Sonic or Mario than a little egg who can just about get around the place, and who can only pick up things and pass them on to other people? (If I had the space, I could go off into heavy irony-based comparisons here, but I won't.). Instead, I'll tell you about the latest Dizzy Game. Alright?

Let's be honest, Dizzy games have never exactly relied upon intricate story lines, so I'll give it as much space as Codemasters have given it - i.e. one paragraph. Ready?

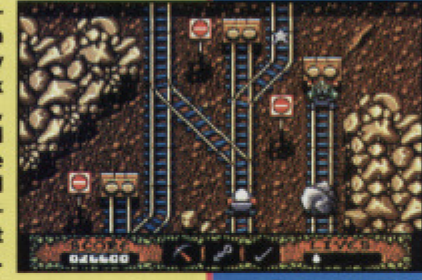
"Daisy has been captured by the evil wizards Zaks. Only Dizzy is brave and clever enough to rescue her from a terrible fate. Leaving the safety of the Yolkfolk's village, Dizzy sets out on his greatest adventure."

There. Wasn't too painful was it?

So with that, Dizzy is off on one of his 'collect this, give it to that' adventures, only this time not only is he accompanied by a bucket load of sub-games, but he's now in full 'scrolly vision'. Yup, long gone are those days of flicking from one screen to another, now Dizzy scrolls effortlessly from scene to scene, complemented by parallax backgrounds 'n' all.

The content of the game isn't really that different from Dizzy's previous outings, with a ton of platforming combined with object-related puzzle solving, but Codemasters promise there's also more gameplay, more hidden fun and better presentation. So confident Mr Dizzy, step up and drop your trousers. Let's see what you've got...

Fairly early on you're treated to the first of the sub-games. Presented as a sliding puzzle, this is actually an opportunity to gain an extra life. Once you've played it a few times, it becomes very easy but it breaks up the game nicely.



(Right) Another sub-game takes place in the mines, with Dizzy hurtling along a track filled with dead ends, falling boulders, bad guys coming the other way and pointy-packed bonuses and pick-ups that can be collected.

THE VERDICT

Fairly recently I reviewed a budget Dizzy game and gave it a hard time because it was so simplistic, and yet here I find myself singing the praises of a game that's pretty much the same. So why the change of heart? I think that a lot of the credit has to go to the much improved presentation of the game. You can now expect smooth scrolling, cute and simple animations and some nice parallax effects. The tunes that play in the background are also pleasant enough, and change with the mood of the game, and although I'm generally the first to turn the volume down, I actually found Dizzy's sonics complement the game nicely. The puzzles themselves are of the standard Dizzy fare - find a cake and give it to the fat bloke, find the barrel of rum and give it to the pirate and so on - but the playing area is much larger so it becomes more difficult to know what to carry with you and what to drop for the moment (and you can bet your life that you'll walk twenty screens to the right and then find that you need the thing you've just dropped). This Dizzy game also seems to make more demands of your platform skils than the previous ones, with some real timing and precision positioning necessary at some points. But I think the major contributor to the game's success is the inclusion of the excellent sub-games. Just when you think you know how everything is going to work from here, some little sub-game crops up and drops you into a completely new challenge with a different sort of gameplay altogether. Ultimately it's all very simple, but all I know is that I had a lot of fun playing this, and I'm sure even the real Dizzy haters (like I was!) will find something here to enjoy.

A500/600

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Purple Haze

£25.99 Out Now

Hard Disk Installable

Joystick

Memory 1Mb | Disks 2

GRAPHICS 83%

SOUND 85%

PLAYABILITY 86%

LASTABILITY 84%

OVERALL 84%

A1200 **CD32**

I checked with Codemasters' PR geezer Richard Eddy who told me "We're eagerly pursuing the possibility of producing an enhanced version which would probably be on the A1200 and CD32. Perhaps." Thank you for your valuable comments.

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL MASTERS 4

VERSION

Quite simply the best Football management game for your computer. We have served thousands of satisfied customers during our 4 years of trading. Over 10,000 man hours (during 5 years) has been dedicated to the production of this constantly improving game. It is one of the most realistic and accurate representations of a professional football managers annual challenge to tactically out wit and conquer every opponent.

Managers : 1 to 4 Human players, Ratings, Performance statistics, sack and offers. 3 Difficulty levels, Manager of the month and season awarded, Pools, Pick any team in any division to begin with.

League & Cup : Premier 22 teams, Division 1,2 & 3 have 24 teams, Play-offs, Tables. 7 Cup competitions with precise rules (2 legs, extra time, away goal rule, seeded draws, European Cup tables, 5 subs, non-domestic player restrictions etc.), Finalist route to glory.

Games : Yearly fixture/previous list, Week fixtures/results, Results from previous meeting with opponent (goes back up to 6 seasons).

Players : Real life statistics reflecting the start of 93/94 season with real positions, height, age. Live transfer market, Contract & wage negotiations, Preferred foot (left/right/both), Loans, Injuries, Training, Special talents, Trainees, Goalkeepers (separate skill categories), Defenders, Midfielders, Attackers & Utility, Retirements, Foreign transfers, Unhappy players, Top 10 Hot shots.

Team : Training, Tactics (15 different styles), Aggression, Formation allows specific player field settings (Left winger, Sweeper etc.).

Club : Sponsorship, Ground improvements, View opponent, Finances

The Match : Real time scoreboard reporting goals & injuries yellow/red cards, Sound effects, Interventions permitted at any time to change tactics, formations and make subs. Physical graphical penalty participation (optional). Over 80 different referees.

Other : Fast load/save, Printer access, 20 Options to set various game preferences, Instruction book, Easy to play, Technical support.

Plus : Over 100 other meticulous refinements impossible to list here.

Editor : Allows you to amend various items in saved games. £12 Extra

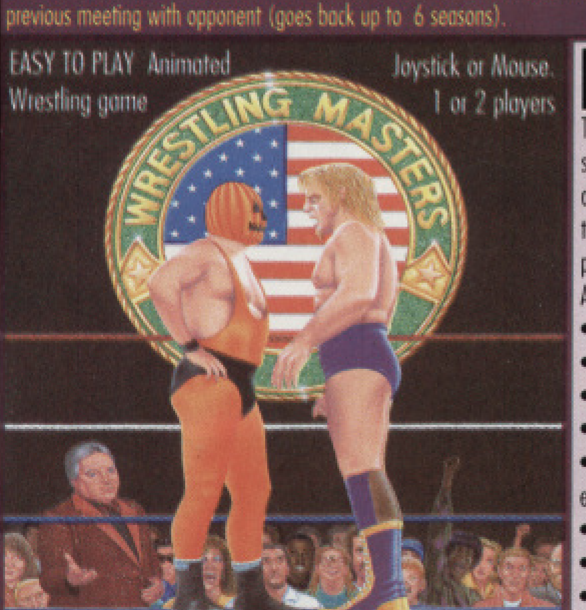
Scottish : Dedicated version details available upon request.

PLAY BY MAIL Service Now Available



EASY TO PLAY Animated Wrestling game

Joystick or Mouse. 1 or 2 players



CRICKET MASTERS

This is a purely managerial cricket manager game that concentrates on strategy and includes plenty of relevant statistics. The game has been designed and developed by a true fan of the sport. It replicates everything that a real manager has to contend with and it's a totally unique production that anyone with an interest in Cricket should experience.

A summary of the main features is shown below:-

- AXA EQUITY & LAW 18 league county teams, 50 overs per game.
- 4 Cup competitions including Benson & Hedges, Nat West.
- 20 different match umpires with accurate names and strictness.
- Accurate player details Surname, height and age.
- 27 different player attributes. Most skills have a direct impact on the effectiveness of each individuals actions during a simulated match.
- Easy player selection. All game text is clearly presented.
- Batting and bowling averages. Top batting and bowling tables.
- 3 Different training intensities to boost batting, bowling or fielding.
- Weather, pitch and light often make an impact on ground condition.
- Full match highlights let you watch the action ball by ball with full graphics and/or realistic sampled sound effects for significant events (Fours, Umpire decisions, etc.). Interventions are permitted at any time to change batting tactics or fielding placings.



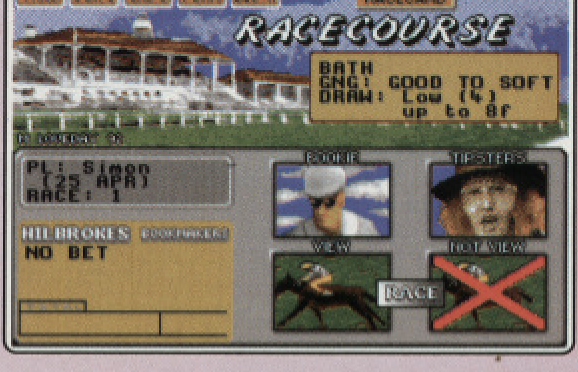
- 3 Batting/Bowling classifications (Normal, Attack and Defend).
- Choice of 15 different field placings.
- Full scorecard results with best batting and bowling figures.
- Other staff (Physio, Groundkeeper, Scout) can be hired and fired .
- Annual league fixtures listing. Current week and last league results.
- View current cup competition draws and historic records.
- Real time transfer market. Player contract and wage negotiations.
- Sponsors, Printer access, Finances, Poor ground fines, Manager rating.
- 15 Options to alter game preferences, Load/Save game.
- Instruction book with plenty of examples.
- Plus many more fine details that we are unable to list here.

STABLE MASTERS V2

This game has been designed to be as close to real racing as possible. Five years of development by a clever racing expert has led to the second revision of this Flat Horse Racing Simulation.

Up to 4 players can participate as Owner Trainers with the primary objective of becoming the top rated trainer, in respect of prize money won, at the end of each racing season (March to November). There are up to 35 other intelligently controlled computer trainers to compete against and compare your personal performance.

To achieve this aim you must discover a potential champion and train them so that they become capable of competing well and winning any of the 47 big prize money races (Handicap and Group). eg. The Derby To give you an idea of the tools provided in this game to assist you reaching your objective we have listed the main features below:-



- 250 horses each with over 60 independent variables.
- 26 different race courses (2 all weather), real life characteristics mirroring the diversity of racecourses in the UK (descriptions provided).
- 20 Jockeys who vary in ability and booking fees, Orders & Feedback.
- Formbook and Win Summary Cards cover the previous 200 races.
- Animated race display or just the result. View Declaration List for races.
- Very informative report by Head stable lad. Tipsters. Bookmakers.
- Racecards similar to racing press. Real life. Handicaps & Race Types.
- Viruses, Injuries & Vets. Load/Save game. Many other items included.

Version 1 is available upon request (Simple training & betting) @ £15.

ORACLE

You could have won £44,836 with this HORSE TIPSTER Utility.

Open National Tipping Competition 1991 : Organised by Racecall, regulated by the Tote, this program achieved joint second. This led to a serious approach from a well known national book maker. Rejected in favour of supporting the public.

Winnings Statistics : 104 wins out of 166, as from 2/6 to 1/9/93.

Formula : This program tells you exactly what to do. You are NOT permitted to amend our system unlike so many other similar programs. How confident can you be in something that invites amendments!

Research & Development : Three years full time race analysis and experimentation to refine and test the prediction system.

Inside Knowledge : Plenty of unique hints from contacts in the know.

User Friendly : No racing knowledge required, easy to use, tutorial book.

Restricted Sales : As soon as our programs predictions have a prolific impact on the betting odds we will stop accepting new buyers.

Monthly Updates : Highly recommended option. If any update fails to break even we'll send the next one free of charge. From £25.

Price Increase : Highly likely. Buy now before success forces increase.

World Cup Cricket Masters

A fantastic graphical and/or tactical representation of Cricket that has been completely written by a traditional fan. You can physically participate with batting and/or bowling or leave it to the computer to automatically handle. See full feature list below :-



GAME OPTIONS

- 1 Day limited overs or test.
- White or coloured clothing.
- Three Cricket grounds.
- Load/Save game. Skill levels.
- Computer/Human players.

ANIMATED ACTION

- Sound Commentary.
- Umpire signals.
- All the strokes cut, pull, drive, etc.
- Appeals, dropped catches, run outs.
- Bouncers, wides and no balls.

STATISTICS

- Scorecard & bowling analysis.
- Weather and ground reports
- Wagon Wheel
- Manhattan Chart.

PLAYER VARIETY

- Rated on 8 adjustable factors.
- Left and right handed players.
- Range of batting types.
- Editor to amend game stats.
- Bowler types include seam, swing, change and both types of spin with 8 speed levels.

FRIENDLY CONTROLS

- Icon driven with point & click.
- Large 3D scrolling screen covering the entire playing area.
- Mouse controls bowler's line, length, direction field settings.
- Joystick control of batsman's attack level, strokes and running between wickets.

VARIABLE CONDITIONS

- Surface and pace of pitch
- Rain, bad light, cloud cover, temperature and humidity.



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					Professional Football Masters V4	24.95	
					P.F.M. Editor V4	12.00	
					Stable Masters V2	24.95	
					Oracle Horse Tipster (RRP £99.95)	75.00	
					Cricket Masters	24.95	
					World Cup Cricket Masters	24.95	
					Wrestling Masters	19.95	

CREDIT CARD NUMBER & EXPIRY E.& O. E. GRAND TOTAL

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SIMON THE



The Amiga scene has been fairly quiet on ye olde point-'n'-click adventure front for some while - but never fear, Adventure Soft is here. Matt Broughton dusts off his pointy hat.

It's not very often that I actually enjoy reading a game manual (especially those for flight sims, strangely) and normally we only bother to look at them to crib some ready-written plot guff for this bit you're reading now - we're professional down here, we are - but when it comes to Simon The Sorceror, it seems the rules have changed.

Yes, cross the adolescent silliness of Adrian Mole's diaries with the surrealism of Rincewind's adventures in the Discworld novels and you've got a fair idea of what to expect. Simon Woodroffe and Laurence Miller deserve a bucket of praise for coming up with this entertainingly-written little gem, which also includes an invitation to anyone pirating the game to "send in your name and address so we can send you a certificate of merit for being so clever." Oh yes, I'm sure! Anyway, about the game...

The hero of the piece is, unsurprisingly, a young lad by the name of Simon who has more than a passing interest in the art of magic. Opening the front door one day, he finds a lost puppy (who he calls Chippy) with a mysterious leather-bound book in his mouth. No one's able to read the strange writing in the mysterious tome, but one night, while looking at the book, Simon gets drawn into a parallel dimension where he finds that he has been chosen to rescue the wizard Calypso. Apparently, the evil Sorcerer Sordid has taken control of this bizarre world, and rescuing Calypso is the first step in returning order to the land...

...And that's about it, as far as plot goes. At first, the game is fairly vague about what's going on and what you have to do - i.e. there's nothing else to do but grab your point-'n'-click gloves and prepare to rock...

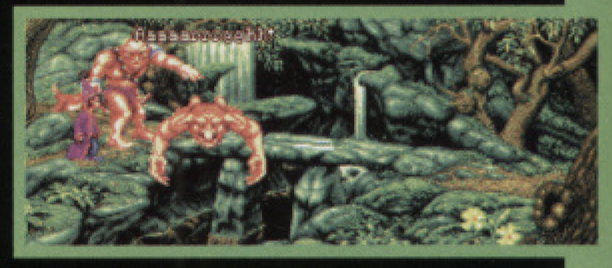
Simon The Sorcerer is, as you might've guessed, a graphic adventure with aspirations to be a Kyrandia beater, boasting slick animations and humorous conversations with computer characters. As is the norm, you must complete a number of sub-tasks which all lead to your ultimate goal and need to collect, utilise and distribute the many items that you'll find along the way.

Games like STS (as it shall be known from hence forth) generally suffer from their puzzles being too abstract or to obvious, so let's have a look at how this little lad does, shall we?

(Above) You won't believe this, but I didn't know what to do at this point. It seems so obvious now - all I needed to do was plant the beans so that a marrow would grow, throw that at the sousaphone player, take the sousaphone and then play it at the sleeping giant so that he'd wake up, stretch his arms, knock down a tree and create a bridge. Pah! How could I have missed it! Anyone got any paracetamol? I think I'm pregnant.

ONCE UPON A TIME....

Simon The Sorceror takes more than its fair share of scenarios from popular fables. I think you might recognise some of these...



● Wandering through the forest, you suddenly find yourself involved in an industrial dispute between a number of billy goats and a troll. Apparently (and this sounds a bit familiar) no one can cross the bridge until the troll gets to eat a goat. But the goats have found a loophole in their contract so now the troll has gone on strike and is blocking the bridge. Luckily for you, a barbarian owes you a favour and, by summoning him with your whistle, he can be very... erm.... 'instrumental' in clearing the way.



● There are only three dwarfs here, but I'm sure I've heard the song they're singing somewhere before. Hmm.... Anyway, thanks to my clever disguise (i.e. the beard I cut off a sleeping dwarf) they've accepted me into their fold and, with a bit of beer-related bribery, should let me take one of the gems that they're mining for. Hi-ho, hi-ho, la-la, la-la-la-la.



● Here in the forest we find a sad thick lout who's just been cleverly duped into swapping a cow for a handful of magic beans. Trouble is, contrary to the popular fairy tale, the only thing magic about these beans is their uncanny ability to persuade stupid people to swap livestock for them. Never mind, I'm sure these will come in useful later. Everything seems to be useful at some point or other.

SORCERER



This is one of the best features of STS's operating system - the map. As you travel futher into the strange world, landmarks appear on your map that can be travelled to immediately rather than having to trudge back through dozens of screens. This is particularly splendid in STS as you are constantly thrown back and forth solving problems that were presented to you hours of gameplay in the past.

(Right) You find the strangest things lying around this place you know. I mean one minutes it's all dark ages, and then you find a metal detector up some woodcutter's bottom. Oh well, mustn't complain really, I've got to find some Milrith metal if I want to make an axe head that can cut through magic trees anyway. Ho-hum, let's have a look over here.

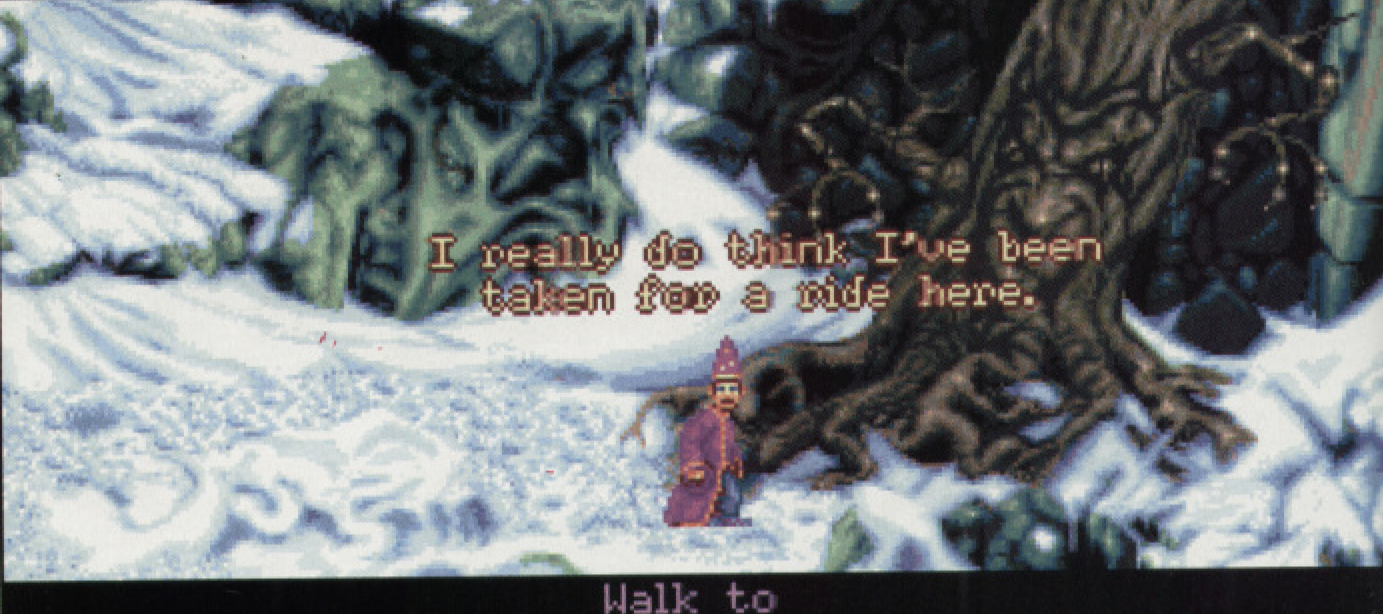


(Below) STS can be a bit cruel as far as red herrings go and things aren't always as straight-forward as they might seem. Putting a fire extinguisher in the same room as a dragon might seem to be an obvious match-up between problem and solution, but several minutes of fruitless experimenting later you'll find yourself wondering if you've been made to look silly. Well, you have, and a bit later on you'll find that the fire extinguisher is, in fact, used to put out a fire. Brilliantly simple, simply brilliant! I knew that anyway - ahem.

This isn't happening...



(Above) I know that I've gone on about how abstract the game is but, to be fair, it never really seems that strange while you're playing. The two reasons for this are: (1) because you get into a similarly ludicrous frame of mind anyway; and (2) the characters you meet always give you enough clues in conversation or description to let you know what's expected of you. Simon himself also talks to the player quite a bit, often with helpful hints.



(Right) No graphic adventure would be complete without a point-'n'-click interface, and STS is no exception. The cursor is fairly intelligent - i.e. it highlights any objects on the screen as you scan - so you may need to indulge in some accurate pixel hunting. If you want to use, give, eat etc any object, just highlight the verb you want and then complete the sentence by clicking over the object you want. You can use objects in your inventory on each other to create new objects, so keep those lateral thinking hats nearby.

RAPUNZEL! RAPUNZEL!

To say that STS has 'slightly twisted' some of the more popular fairy tales is a bit of an understatement. Needless to say, the following is just one example of the strange folk you'll discover on your travels.



You've come to a tower with no apparent way in, but ring the nearby bell and a huge golden pigtail will fall to the ground for you to climb. Oh yes, this all looks very familiar. I do believe it's time to open a bottle of wine and turn on the charisma. "Do you think I'm sexy, and d'ya want my body? Come on baby, let me know". Grrr. I'm a love machine.



Well, I was expecting the hair to be attached to something other than the wall - but looky here. "Hello lady. Let's do-oo it!" She seems a bit shy, but from what I can gather she's been imprisoned by the wicked witch for some reason. Not to worry, "And now good lady, perchance I might steal kiss from those ruby red lips..." Hang on - she's changing into... into...





I feel a bit like Nanette Newman, but if you compare the picture above (standard version) with the one below (A1200 version) I think you'll appreciate the cosmetic advantage of the latter. The A1200 version actually features 128 colours on-screen, but it looks just like the full AGA effect so what the hell? Now you know why my hands are so soft.



(Below) STS breaks no new ground as far as conversations go, implementing the good old 'pick a sentence - any sentence' routine. As you can see, your replies aren't always of any value other than silly, which is generally an indication that you're about to enter a no-win situation.





...A PIG!! Bloody hell! If I'd wanted to kiss a pig, I'd have gone round Bjork's house. Oh well, at least that explains why she's called Repulser and not Rapunzel. Remembering a cottage earlier in the game that had a huge door made of truffles, it would seem that perhaps this isn't as pointless a situation as it would seem. Come with me, my little bacon sandwich...

THE VERDICT

At last! It seems like ages since the Amiga has been treated to a decent graphic adventure romp (Er, what about Beneath A Steel Sky, Matt? - David.) but now, thanks to Adventure Soft, it's time once again to swap disks until you can't swap no more. STS has pretty much all the elements that are necessary for a successful adventure, with the only major missing ingredient being the lack of real threat. By this I mean that you never actually feel as if you're in danger from any of the characters that you encounter. Though you run into witches, dwarfs, trolls, etc, you're never really worried about doing anything wrong because there's no way to be killed. That apart, the game is excellent. The puzzles are, thankfully, not too abstract - a trap many companies have fallen into trying to make their adventures more difficult - the good old point-'n'-click interface does its job beautifully and the inclusion of such handy extras as the mini-map (for fast journeys over long distance) make the game one of the more user-friendly around. The graphics are excellent with some decent animations, though it has to be said that the music (which can be switched off - phew!) doesn't seem to have made best use of the Amiga's sound. Couldn't we have had sound effects instead? Disk swapping is always a big problem with Amiga adventures but I'm pleased to report that STS isn't too bad. I think that most hardened Amiga adventure fans are fairly patient anyway, but the game has been broken up well, thus avoiding disk swapping EVERY time you walk off the screen. Though STS doesn't rank as an absolute classic, it's still definitely a must for any fans of the graphic adventure genre.

A500/600

Publisher: Adventure Soft
Developer: In-house

£34.99 Out Now

Hard Disk Installable

Mouse/ Keyboard

Memory 1Mb | Disks 9

GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	88%
LASTABILITY	87%
OVERALL	89%

A1200
CD32

The A1200 version is now out at £39.99, and features 128 colours on-screen as well as the obvious speed improvements, although it still comes on nine disks. A CD32 version is now in the pipeline and though nothing has been finalised yet, this will be a specific CD version rather than just a straight copy of the A1200 game. This should appear sometime after Easter with any luck.

UPDATES...UPDATES...

Stauped, destpau and pestuda are just three stupid words that can be made from the word Updates. Only now do you realise how much fun Matt Broughton has bringing you the latest in A1200 and CD32 releases.

ALFRED CHICKEN

CD32; Mindscape
£24.99



Weeeell... Alfred now has 256 colours, a CD quality soundtrack, a parallaxed scrolly backgrounds and... er... that's it really. Oh, apart from the way the light bounces off the CD disk in a much more attractive way than it did off a floppy disk. The End. You want more? Really? Oh, all right then.

Simon awarded Alfred a top 86% back in October (oh, how the months fly by) and we also gave you an excellently playable demo on the coverdisks. But now Alf's back, and he's wearing his best CD feathers.

You take on the role of Alfred (and I don't mean you put on a silly costume and turn up at every computer games show) and must get across a number of platform-intense levels. All you have to protect yourself with is a sharp beak and a sharp wit as you leap and flap your way across the simply drawn yet strangely appealing levels, while all manner of weird and nasty things attempt to ruffle your feathers, many of which can only be dispatched with a well-timed dive bomb.

But it's not just a case of making it alive and unplucked from the level's start to its end - you need to release a set number of balloons before the door out opens up and permits access to the next wacky world. Also there are diamonds littering the screen that you can collect to help you achieve your high-score.

Although fundamentally quite simple, Alfred can become much more complicated if you're a curious soul because this is a game literally bursting at the seams with hidden secrets, to the point where most of your time is spent jumping against walls in the hope that you'll fall into a concealed tunnel and find some juicy extra lives or power-ups.

With its much enhanced graphics, superb bouncy soundtrack and immense playability Alfred proves to be a bit of a corke, and it's certainly one of the finest platform games you'll see on your CD32 at the mo'.

OVERALL: 87%



WING COMMANDER

CD32; Origin
£00.00p

£00.00p? Yes, it's true - anyone buying a CD32 from now on gets an extra CD buhdled with it, bearing Wing Commander and Dangerous Streets plus a few show-'em-off-to-your-mates demos of what the CD32 can do. The less said about Dangerous Streets the better, especially as Simon has already explained its extraordinary awfulness in-depth on page 66.

Thankfully WC more than makes up for the deficiencies of its partner. In case you didn't know it's basically a 3D space shoot-'em-up, with you cast in the star role as a Terran pilot battling the cat-like Kilrathi in a series of missions.

But what sets this apart from any other space games you've seen is the presentation - the idea, you see, is that you're taking part in an epic Star Wars-style movie, so between the blasting you get treated to loads of film-ish sequences as you chat to fellow pilots in the bar, receive your mission briefings and debriefings and take off and land. Do well and there are more of these sequences to be enjoyed as you are rewarded with promotion and even medals.

This CD32 update is a big improvement on the A500 original that appeared eighteen months ago. For a start, the graphics are now in full 256-colour glory, which certainly makes a big difference to the movie bits. The 3D combat is all the better for the extra colours too, with the enemy ships actually looking like ships now, rather than pixeJly blobs. Thanks to 32-bit jiggery-pokery, this has all been achieved with no loss of speed, with the game easily running as fast as the old version did on the A1200, i.e. it's playable.



Special mention should also be made of the inspired joypad controls, which let you get at all the ships functions that used to be accessed from the keyboard via a combination of button presses. Although it takes a little while to learn them they soon become second nature and add to the playability no end - in fact, I was doing things on this version that I never bothered to try on the A500 version because it was so much hassle fumbling for the correct keys.

Since the data is now accessed from faster-than-floppy CD everything runs more smoothly, with the iMUSE-style soundtrack to the battles working much more effectively, nicely chopping and changing tempo and theme with the action.

If I wanted to pick I could say that it would have been nice to have the characters actually speaking when they talked to you, rather than their words appearing as text below their portraits, but then you can't have everything. Overall this is good, undemanding, atmospheric stuff, and a definite feather in any CD32 owner's cap - especially as it's free!

OVERALL: 90%



LOTUS - THE TRILOGY

CD32; Gremlin
£29.99

Gremlin have now released a compilation featuring all three of the very popular and very successful Lotus games all on one CD.

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Originally released way back in 1990, LETC is a one- or two-player split-screen game that takes you and your Lotus Esprit across some thirty two-tracks worldwide as you strive for the ultimate achievement - the Lotus Licence.

Compared to what came later this is basic stuff. The computer cars have fairly predictable driving patterns and the variety between tracks is minimal, although there are hazards, such as rocks in the road and speed-killing pools of water, to avoid in the later stages of the game.

Despite this simplicity, however, LETC is good fun to play (indeed, some would say this is still the best of the three), with its main failing being that the screen remains split even in one-player mode and the lone player may get frustrated at the cramped view of the action.

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE 2

A year on from the original game, this upgrade gives you the option to not only drive a Lotus Elan as well as an Esprit, but also to do this on a full-screen in one-player mode. This version also includes more enemy cars, oncoming traffic, varying weather conditions, city driving, night driving and fog-bound roads.

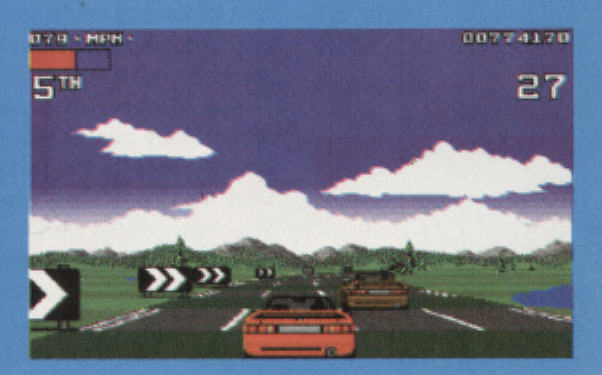
LOTUS 3 - THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

Lotus 3 is really a mixture of the best of 1 and 2, with a bundle of extras thrown in such as five new themed levels, each with their own graphical style and effect on the cars handling. The game also features the Lotus concept car, the M2000, along with new music, sound effects and general presentation tweaks.

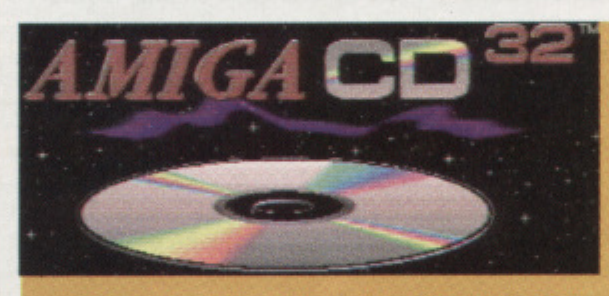
The major improvement in Lotus 3, though, is the introduction of the RECS track editor. Whereas most track editors involve piecing the track together Scalextrix fashion, the RECS system allows you to alter the settings on particular attributes to that track. So, by altering the balance of hills, curves, etc, the computer will generate a new track for you to race on.

All in all, this is an interesting pack - historically, if nothing else - though in honesty it seems a bit silly to offer all three because once you've played 2 and 3, you're unlikely to go back to Lotus 1.

I'm not going to give a mark for this overall package as it's hard to know exactly what criteria to set it against. Suffice to say that they are all superb games in their own rights - but do you really need all three? The decision, as they say, is yours. (I'd choose number three, Cilla.)







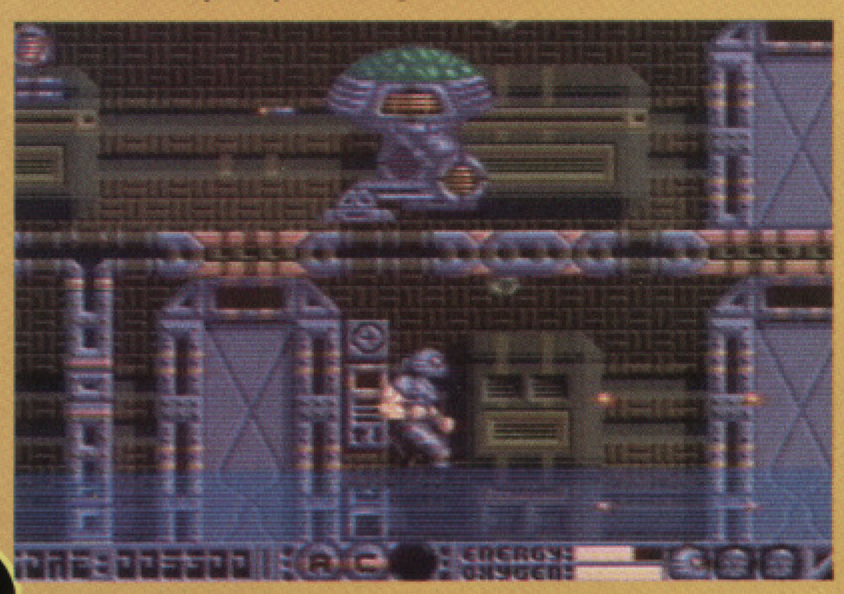
FOR YOUR CD PLEASURES!

The CD32 seems to be going from strength to strength, so here are a few more standard games that have been ported straight across onto those lovely shiny disk things.

DEEP CORE
ICE £26.99

Deep Core earned itself a respectable 81% way back in August, and here it is again reproduced in faithful CD-O-Vision.

You take on the role of Captain Downrazor, a hardened Navy diver type, and must explore an underwater nuclear research base that mysteriously ceased contact with the surface after a unidentified object crashed into the sea nearby. Suffice to say that aliens have taken over, and you're the only man hard enough to take them on.



You start with only a puny gun, but shoot a couple of aliens here and there and you'll be rewarded with super power-ups and more weaponry.

The base is split into sections divided by locked doors, and therefore a large amount of your time will be spent looking for coded keys to give you access to further levels.

It's all very decent platform/shoot-'em-till-they-die action, and well worth a look at.

MEAN ARENAS
ICE £26.99

Mean Arenas appeared on the Amiga a fair few months back now and, to be honest, I liked it a lot. Well, fortunate CD32 owners, you too can now grab yourself a copy of this interesting puzzle/Pacman-esque romp for your shiny box of love.

The game is essentially an upgraded Pacman for the 90s, but with enhanced gameplay and extra features including guns, bombs, teleports, conveyor belts, rocket launchers, and just about anything else you can think of really. It's presented to you as a game show of the future, with your two hosts popping up between levels to offer tips along the way.

This version is identical to the original (right down to the picture of a floppy disk when it accesses the CD - doh!) and is a good old-fashioned simple time waster. A personal favourite of the Pope's so I'm lead to believe. (Not true, I believe. - Dave.)







WIN!

3 FANTASTIC SKI JACKETS!

Courtesy of



"You train very hard, and who can blame ya? Welcome the brave athletes who come from Rumania!"

Yes, it's the Winter Olympics once again - the time when the world's corniest poetry writers assemble to dream up hopeless rhymes for all the places you've never heard of, which the announcers then recite as each country's athletes march into the arena for the first time. If God had a sense of humour he would have named one country 'Orange' because, as we all know, there are no words in the English language which rhyme with that particular fruit. But life is full of those 'If onlys', isn't it?

Like "If only I had a warm jacket to see me through these winter months." Yes, we've all raised our heads to the stars and silently made that wish, haven't we? Which is rather fortunate considering that we've got three of these clothing equivalents of thermos flasks (??? - Everyone) to give away, and it's all thanks to those generous folk at top softco US Gold.

The International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) could have granted the WInter Olympic licence to anyone, but USG's reputation as the 'leading European software publisher' and the fact that they managed to sell over one million copies of Barcelona '92 Summer Olympics across a number of different formats prompted the I.O.C. to reward the Birmingham-based softco with the honour of producing the only official Winter Olympics game.



Winter Olympics, the game, will feature ten events: Downhill skiing, Slalom, Super Slalom, Super G, Biathlon, Short Track Speed Skating, Freestyle Moguls, SKi Jump, Bob Sleigh and Luge, and will be released to coincide with the start of the Games. But before we reveal how you can win a copy of the game, here are a few facts (I'd advise you to pay attention).

- The XVIIth Olympic Winter Games kicks off in Lillehammer on 12th February and runs for 16 days.
- Competitions will be held in 12 sports with a total of 55 disciplines.
- 60 Nations will compete with 1800 athletes in total.
- 2 million meals will be served, twice as many as the total number of hot dogs that will be sold.
- 2 billion people across the world are expected to watch the Games on TV while 100,00 spectators will attend in person.

Right, got that? Good - on with the questions.

HOW TO WIN

Okay, to stand a chance of winning a jacket you must correctly answer the following three multiple choice questions and be one of the first three to be picked out of the hat after the closing date (which is the 28th of March, by the way). These prizes are not transferable and no cash alternative is available. As always, the Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. All entries should be sent to Brrr, Bit Nippy Compo, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Okay? Get on with it, then.

(1) What date will the Winter Olympic Games end this year?
(a) 26th February, 1994.
(b) 27th February, 1994.
(c) 28th February, 1994.

(2) How many hot dogs will be sold during this year's Games?
(a) 1 million.
(b) 2 million.
(c) 4 million.

(3) What does XVII mean in proper English numbers?
(a) 15.
(b) 16.
(c) 17.

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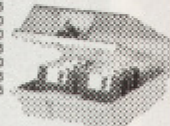
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REPLAYS!

There's never been a better time to buy budget - so much so, that we've decided to devote a whopper FIVE pages of the issue to this month's Replays! Now you can get the complete low-down on what's out and shouting about on the budget scene...

SPACE CRUSADE

GBH £9.99

Turning board games into computer games is considered by some to be the most pointless exercise in the world today. What's the point of taking a game that four people can play at any time of the day, turn it into a computer game that supports just a single player and usually costs twice as much?

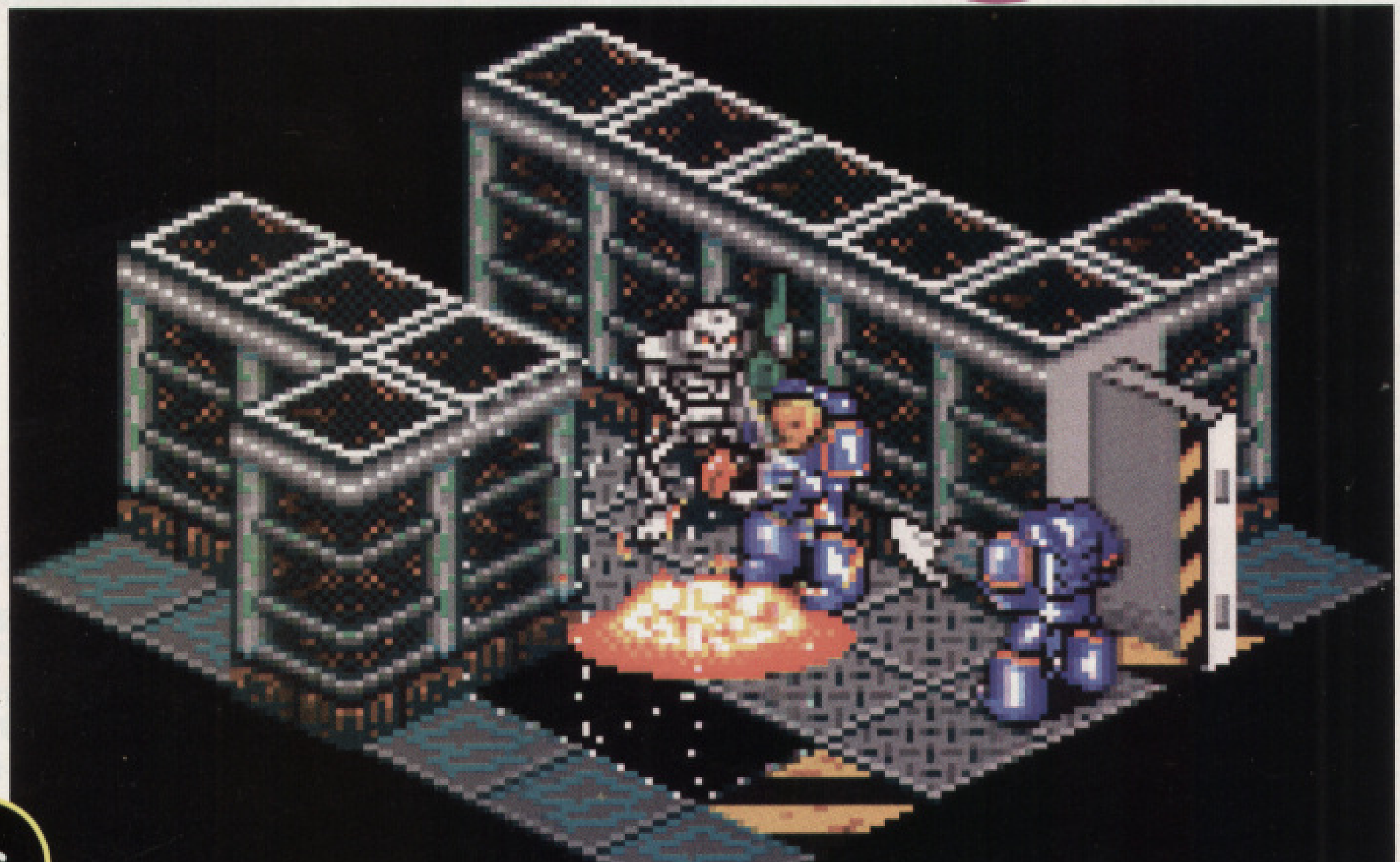
At least we don't have to worry about the last point with Space Crusade any more. Coming in at just under a very respectable tenner, Space Crusade has reached its optimum price. For a full-price game, this tale of space marines versus Giger aliens was somewhat limiting. Strategically it wasn't bad and the amount of missions ensured you'd still be battling through it months after you started, but whenever it came down to combat all the excitement vanished. For a tenner, though, the strategic element is more than enough.

Command your various marines as they storm through one derelict space hulk after another, armed with everything from Power Axes to Missile Launchers. Imagine Syndicate working on a turns basis, with slightly cruder graphics and set in space. Now you're getting it. But rather than being forced to play the game in 3D all the time, you can choose to use a clearer 2D display, which is invaluable in some situations..

Unlike Gremlin's previous Games Workshop conversion Hero Quest, Space Crusade deliberately attempts to do more than just convert the game directly. Thus you get animations of the Marine's at play (or should it be work - oh, hell, it's all the same with these boys) and the chance to improve your squad as you play through the missions.

Is it fun? To a limited extent. After a while the missions get a little samey and, as is often the case with budget re-releases, we've seen a good many better strategy games since this first game out but for the asking price you can't really complain. [MB]

OVERALL 75%



THE LORDS OF POWER

Ubi Soft £34.99



This compilation tenuously links a variety of games under one banner. Yes, I can see that Silent Service II and Perfect General offer real control over a number of people. But Railroad Tycoon and Red Baron? Give me a break - a pilot and Sir Bob Reid are hardly 'Lords Of Power'! I'm not going to review Railroad and Silent again as they've already appeared on budget, but I will say that they are great and average respectively.

Which leaves us with Red Baron and Perfect General. Well, Red Baron was great on the PC, but the Amiga version is extremely slow and the dogfights shown on the box come across as slow-moving and extremely tedious affairs. What's more, the action is far too simplistic, making this one a bit of a no-no, really.

With one game out of the three worth having so far, it falls to Perfect General to save the package. Oops. Ah well, wargames need a little something extra to appeal to newcomers to the genre, but Perfect General is far too dull to win any fans. All the usual dull maps and options are there, but not once does it offer anything new. Very average

In all, £35 is way too steep for this bundle of non-entities - only Railroad Tycoon is worth owning - and that can be bought for just over a tenner courtesy of Action 16. [SB]

OVERALL 44%

SILLY PUTTY

GBH £9.99

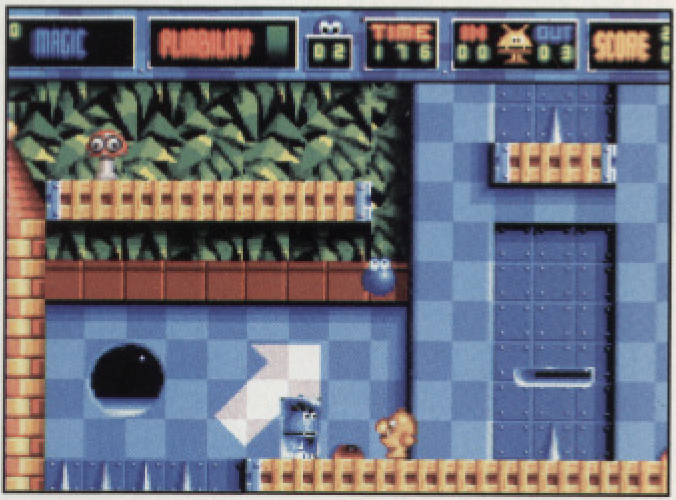
A Terminator carrot, Biggles the wasp, pigs on space hoppers and a self-motivated tomato. Now this is my kind of game. Silly Putty was one of the most inventive platform/puzzle games seen in '92, and you'll be pleased to hear that it's still leaps and bounds ahead of most of today's fare.

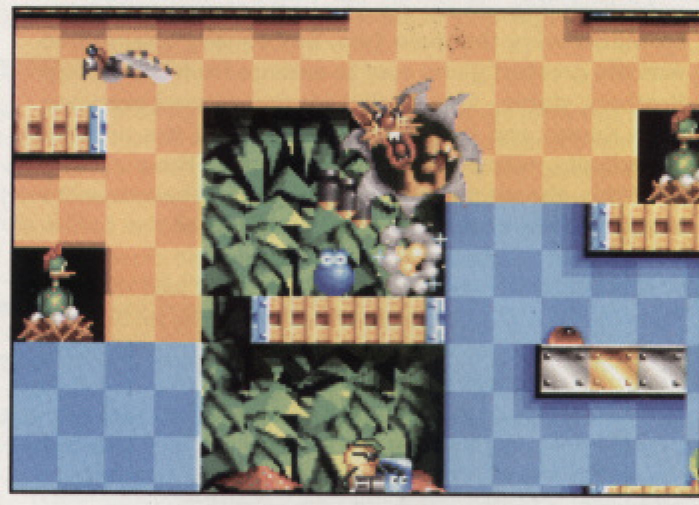
Silly Putty's biggest charm is its graphics. Superbly animated squelchy things combined with brilliantly funny enemies mean that the game looks as good as the original Arsenal kit and allows me to get out my big book of superlatives. Yay! These are perfectly accompanied (see, I'm still at it) by some wonderful sound effects that are guaranteed to drive everyone else in the room mad in less than five minutes (which is always a good thing in my book - not the superlative one but a different book). These again are reinforced by some capital gameplay, absolutely first-rate, excellent, really excellent (whoa, boy).

The delight to be had from Silly Putty comes from the sheer lunacy of what the player can do. It has flaws, but what game doesn't? Sometimes the controls can be a little fiddly and there isn't really a learning curve to speak of (a single introductory training level then you're right in at the deep end). Still, these are minor niggles for sure, and soon disappear once you become familiar with the game mechanics.

Adeptees of the genre (if such a word exists) will no doubt relish the challenge and grasp their sticks with a firm hand (and so we sink slowly into the world of innuendo - a review for all tastes, truly). The rest will just have to enjoy the wonders that pepper the early stages. Still, quite superb, though. [MB]







OVERALL 92%

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Kixx XL £15.99

Eye Of The Beholder was US Gold's attempt to outdo FTL's absolutely fantastic Dungeon Master RPG. By adding flashier graphics and more monsters, they certainly made it look more realistic than FTL's often comedic game - but it was Eye's many puzzles which won it its legion of fans. After all, RPG fans aren't easily won over by fancy sprites, it's realism and mind-bending puzzles which are the order of the day - anything else is just a bonus. Set within a sprawling dungeon, hordes of the usual skeletons and dragons stand between your party of four and the treasure they are searching for. Along the way, they also stumble across caches of useful weaponry and spells which enable them to enhance their abilities - see, you also get a bit D & D lobbed in for good measure!



Whilst not quite as involving as Dungeon Master, Eye Of The Beholder is a worthwhile addition to the collection. It's easy to control and features more than enough battles and spells to keep most Thors and Merlins happy. It can get a little repetitive at times and it seems to involve more wandering in circles than the FTL game, but perseverance brings its own rewards - and some of the abominations you'll encounter on the later levels are quite simply stunning.

Budget labels are a real godsend for the RPG fan. Such is the depth of most of the RPGs released over the last year or so, it's all-too easy to miss a goodie as you're midway through your last purchase. At Kixx's lower price, Eye Of The Beholder represents fantastic value for money and if you've never dabbled with the underworld caverns of an RPG, this is the best entry you could ask for. [SB]

OVERALL 86%

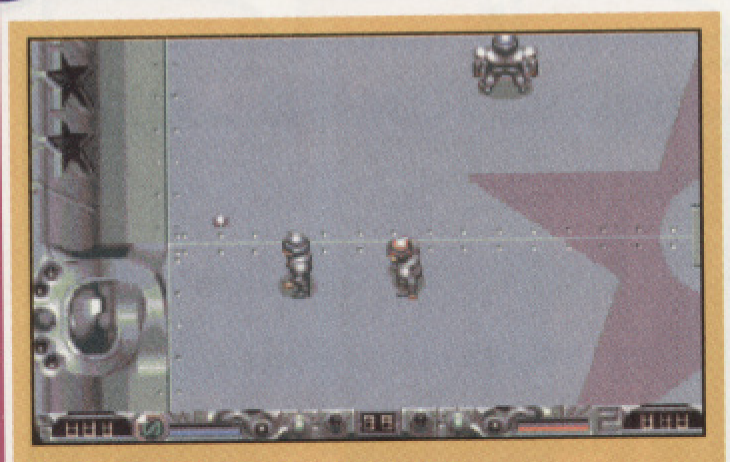
LORDS OF CHAOS

Buzz £9.99

It has to be said that the wargamer is rather undersold when it comes to their favourite fare. It seems to me you can either... hold on, I've just done that bit! Still, it's hardly surprising when you consider that Lords Of Chaos uses the same game system as Laser Squad, replacing the assorted space dudes with the usual array of wizards and creatures replacing space rogues, and the futuristic lasers with anyone of forty-five spells.

Yessiree, it's magical missions again as up to four players are invited to get together in search of things to kill and treasure to loot. The scenario isn't quite as appealing as Laser Squad's, but the gameplay is the same sort of thing making this the next step if Laser got you interested. It won't appeal as much as the Eye of The Beholders and Dungeon Masters, but it's cheap and it's a lot deeper. [MB]

OVERALL 82%



SPEEDBALL II

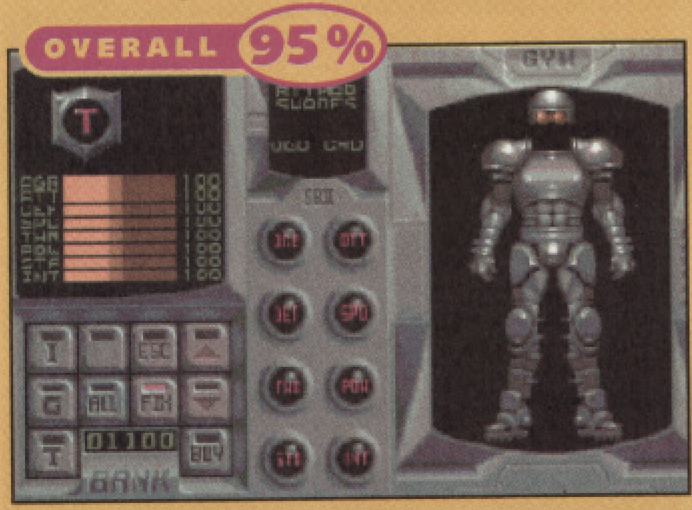
Buzz £9.99

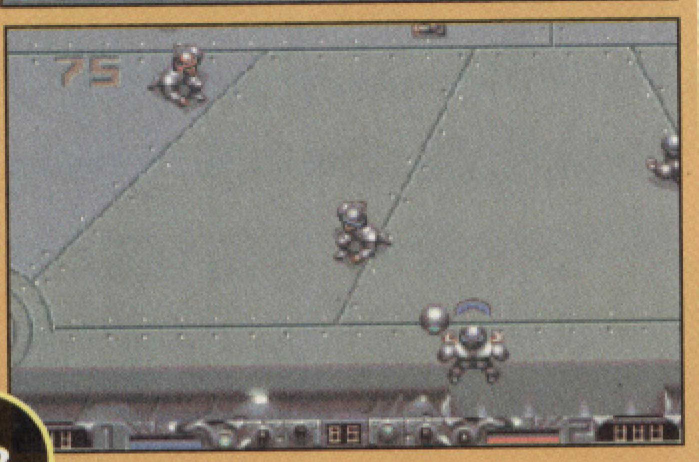
Now, I'm not going to keep making crap jokes about Robert Maxwell's skinny dipping session and the fate of Mirrorsoft, but it has to be said that a great deal of titles didn't get the credit they deserved after the porcine publisher's impromptu dip. The First Samurai and Mega-Lo-Mania were the main two, but equally abandoned was the greatest game ever to emerge from the Bitmap Brothers' stable - Speedball II. Having wowed everyone with Xenon and its sequel - and indeed the original Speedball - nobody could have foreseen the playability of this, the ultimate futuresport. Many have tried to create visions of what the Will Carlings of the future will be paid for, but only the Bitmaps came close.

A mixture between American Football and Hockey, Speedball II is played across a massive metal pitch, with the player attempting to guide a group of promising newcomers to glory. Basically, what follows is a fantastic, fast-paced ruck where the players beat up anyone in their way as they try to slam the ball into the opponent's goal. Power-ups and bonuses also appear and these add extra abilities to your motley crew.

Speedball II is one of those games every Amiga owner should have. Alongside the likes of Rainbow Islands and Monkey Island it shows off the Amiga to its very best. They don't come much more playable than this, and that is the highest recommendation I can give. [MB]

OVERALL 95%





LASER SQUAD

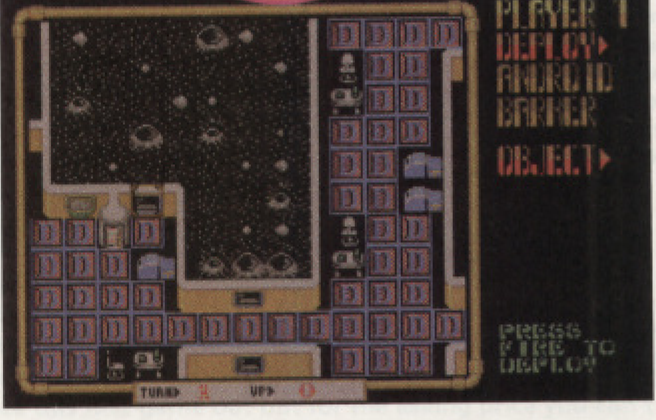
Buzz £9.99

It has to be said that the wargamer is rather undersold when it comes to their favourite fare. It seems to me you can either replay famous battles such as Tobruk and Arnhem or simply leap into the future for slightly enhanced versions of said battles with the Gattling guns replaced by lasers.

Such an unoriginal scenario paves the way for Laser Squad - but what it loses in originality, it more than makes up for in content. A one or two-player game, Laser Squad offers the player five SF scenarios across seven difficulty levels as they encounter a number of space battles. As the leader of yet another ragbag assortment of heroes, everything from deploying weapons to interacting with anyone you meet is under your control. The joystick or the keys are used to make the assorted selections, and these are backed up by a series of sub-menus which go into greater detail - battle tactics and attack formations, for instance.

If wargaming was never your bag, then Laser Squad offers the perfect chance to give it a whirl. It's deceptively easy to get into and absorbing to play. Granted it resembles a Spectrum game - and it is indeed an updated version of an old Speccy game called Rebel Star Raiders, fact fans - but in terms of depth this cannot be rivalled. Go on, pass on another update of Project X and give this a go. You may be surprised. [MB]







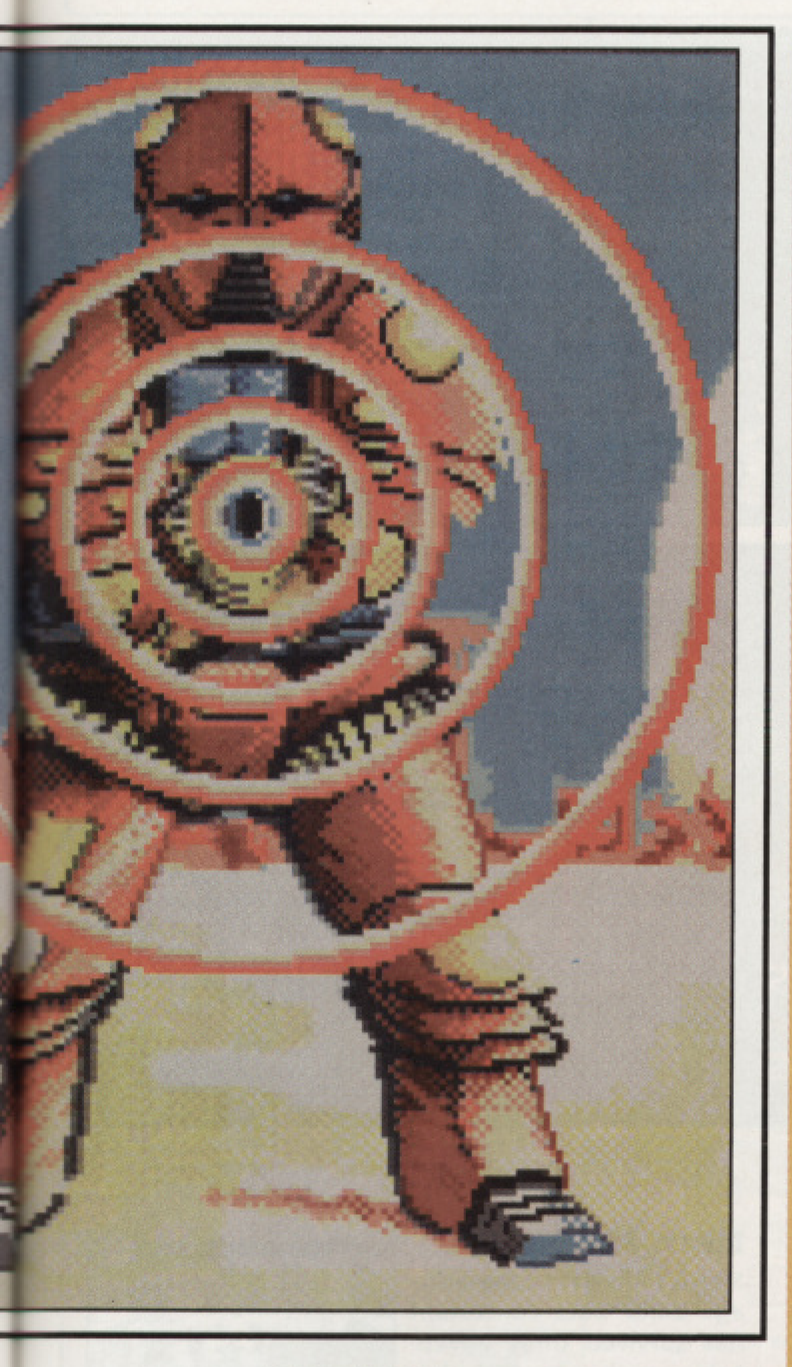
BLACK CRYPT Hit Squad Platinum £12.99

Black Crypt was EA's attempt to take on the likes of Eye Of The Beholder at their own game. Unsurprisingly, with the countless 3D RPGs on the market at the time (1990), it fell by the wayside and was largely ignored.

A bit of a pity really, as Black Crypt - despite the complete lack of an originality - is by no means a stinker. At the time of its release its blend of smooth 3D locations and monsters garnered it all manner of magazine accolades - and rightfully so. However, when compared to the likes of Tony Crowther's Knightmare licence and the aforementioned FTL and SSI games, it does look a little rough around the edges.

There are plenty of rooms to explore in the game's titular crypt, but most of the game is spent plodding from one area to the next in search of the same old

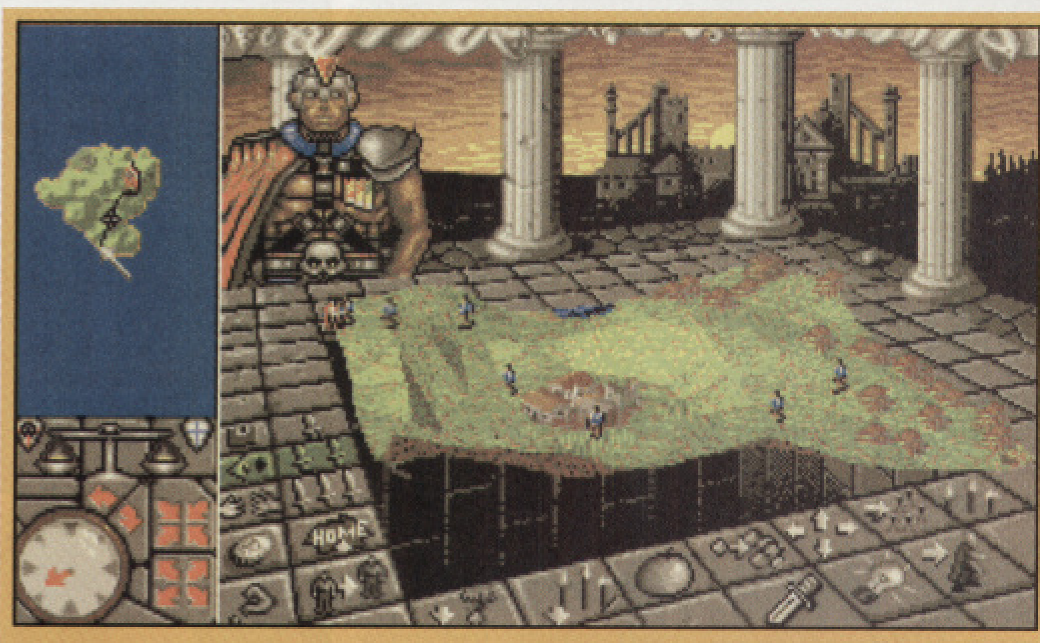






potions and weapons - let alone something to use them on (definite proof that size definitely doesn't matter if David Upchurch ever needed one). In all, whilst Black Crypt can still hold its own at this new budget price, it still isn't an essential buy. RPG completists will probably buy it out of curiosity, but with the RPG genre growing larger and more detailed each day, once again Black Crypt may become the Stan Bowles of RPGdom - i.e.. not a bad player but easily forgotten. [SB]

OVERALL 69%



POWERMONGER AND DATA DISK

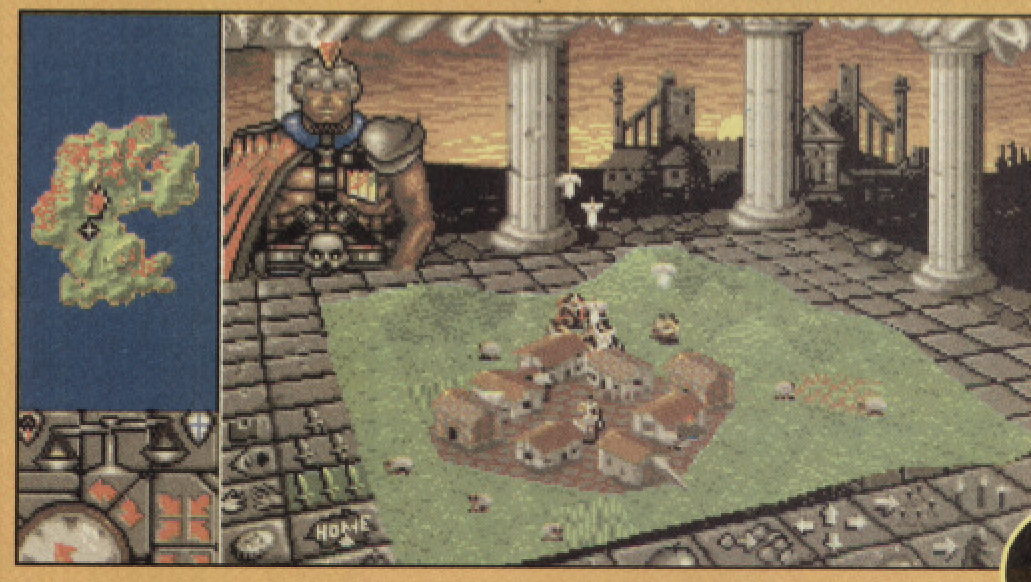
Hit Squad Platinum £12.99

Following Populous was never going to be easy, but Bullfrog pulled it off with this smart-looking wargame. Stepping into the tunic of a would-be army general, several beautifully-drawn locations of hills and villages are yours for the taking - provided the computer-controlled opponents don't get there first, of course. Using a simplistic option system, the usual wargame tasks of making pacts, killing people and sending loads of men to their death are on offer.

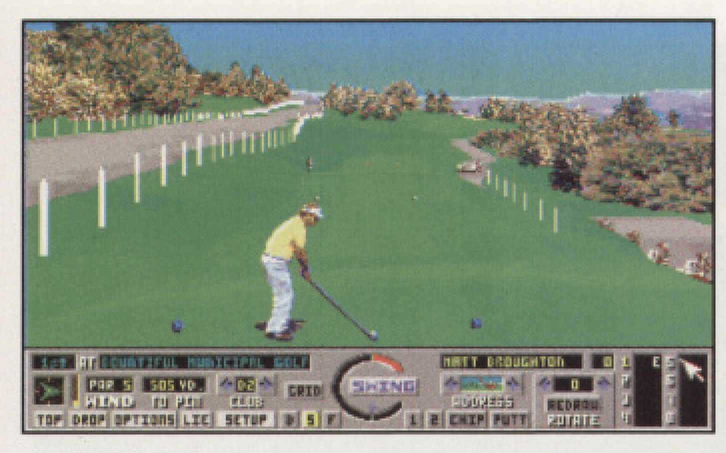
What raises Powermonger above the rest is that the results of your actions are immediately visible. You want to attack a village? Great, just sit back and watch your clan outnumber and slay everyone in the vicinity! How about setting up a camp if it starts to snow? As Burger King say, you got it. What's more, those generous Mancunians at Ocean have also bunged the World War I data disk into the package which offers more of the same but with several different scenarios. Well overdue for a budget release, and the fact that the data disk is also included earns this one... [SB]

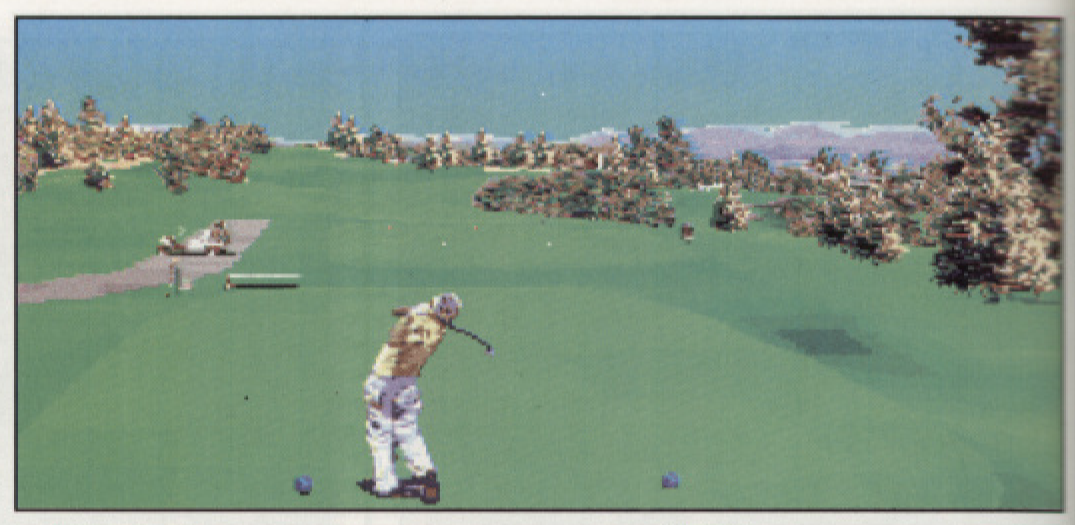
OVERALL 87%













LINKS

Kixx XL £11.99

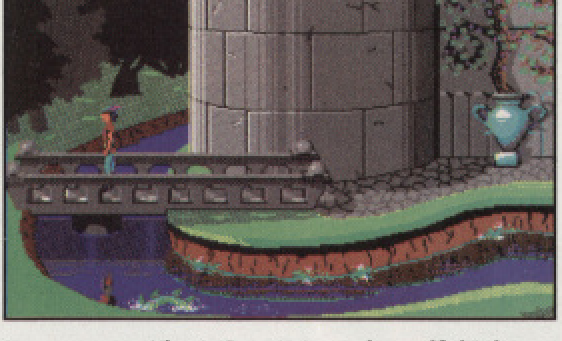
In theory it sounds great: create the most detailed golf game ever by including extremely detailed greens and an extended array of options. After all, it worked on the PC so why shouldn't it work on the Amiga?

Well, I don't know why it didn't work, but the fact of the matter is that Links is the slowest game ever to hit the Amiga. It takes so long to draw each hole that you'd rather sit in the nineteenth hole listen to the likes of Tarby and Brucey telling jokes than continue playing. Yes, Links may indeed be an extremely detailed game - but it certainly isn't fun to play. It's all very well having player sprites which move better than ever before and super realistic ball movement, but do the programmers really think we're willing to wait all day for it? In fact, when you consider that US Gold's Amiga version of Leaderboard is now approaching its fifth birthday, it's rather disgusting the Brummie wonders can't improve upon it. My advice? Stick with PGA Tour, this stinks... [SB]



KING'S QUEST

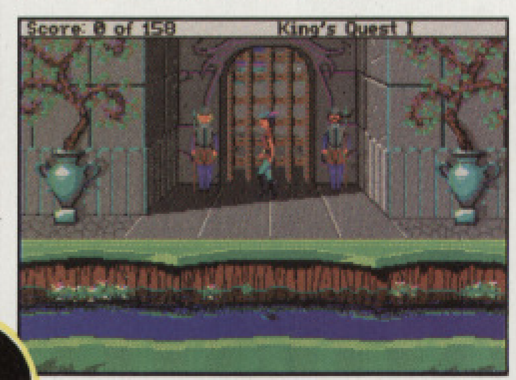
Kixx XL £12.99



Another dated Sierra release, King's Quest was in fact the adventure which saw them hit the big time. After years trying to teach Americans to count with Mother Goose, Roberta Williams finally got around to putting an idea she once had on to a handy PC. The rest, as they say (but only on clichéd TV shows) is history, and the King's Quest games are now on their fifth sequel. Using the same point-'n'-click interface as the Leisure Suit Larry games, King's Quest stars a beautiful Princess as she makes her way across an enchanted kingdom. As can be expected in this sort of adventure, an evil entity is in the proces of tainting her fair land, so she sets out to stop it - although, as a Princes you'd think she had loads of armies for that sort of thing. All the usual adventure clichés are trotted out - kissing frogs, etc, you know the sort of thing - and progress to the end is via a series of object-related puzzles.

Bearing in mid this is the direct predecessor to Leisure Suit Larry, it's obvious that it's going to suffer from the same faults. The controls over the lovely Princes are extremely finicky, and, once again, missing a vital object or mini puzzle means you'll have to retrace your steps to the start. Also, its creaky age means it'll never win any awards for its presentation and the beautiful Princes sprite is reduced to a cluster of pixels crowned with what appears to be yellow rope on its 'head' (for want of a better word). A blast from the past this may be. Recommended it certainly ain't. [SB]

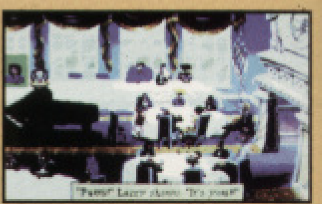






LEISURE SUIT LARRY

Kixx XL £14.99



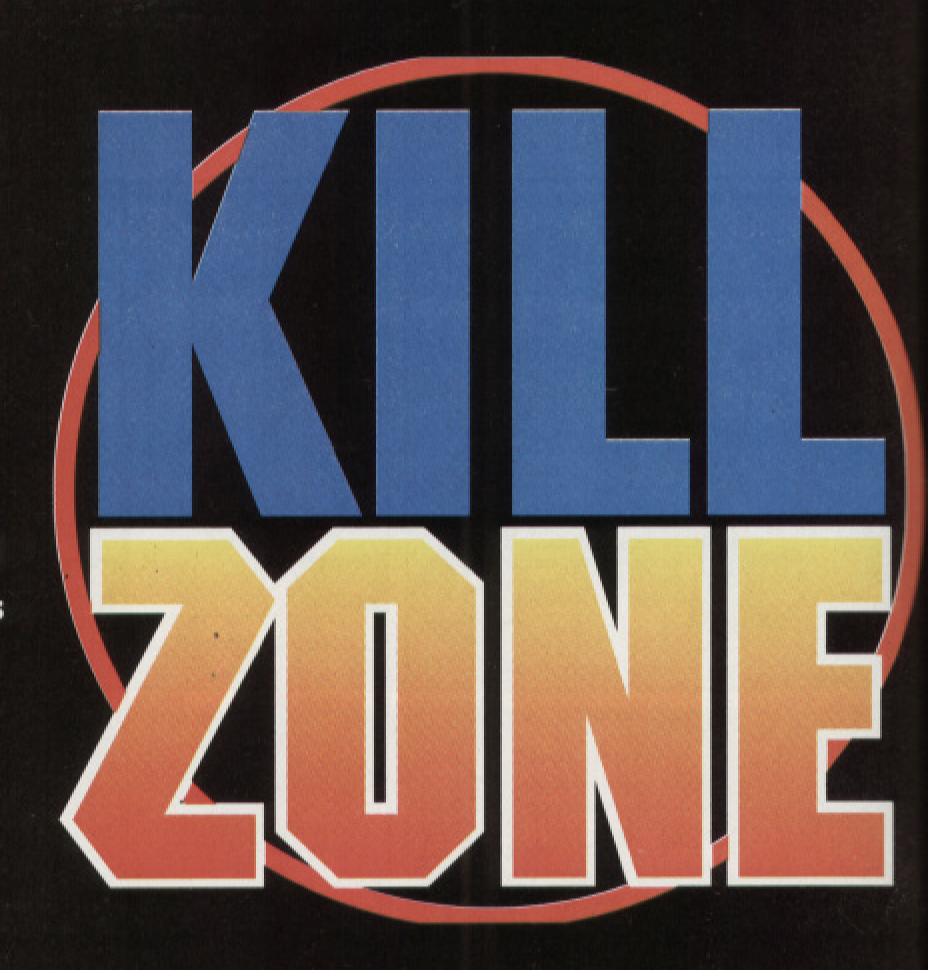
Sierra's answer to the average Blind Date contestant has survived three adventures, each of which has been more complex than the last. For this first game, though, we are introduced to the randy old stoat who is Leisure Suit Larry, as he sleazes his way through life in search of the love of his life - or a leg-over at least!

Larry is a real loser. He's losing his hair, he has no luck with women, and his taste in clothes makes him look like the fourth Bee Gee (ask your mum). Still, with you controlling his actions in this flick-screen point'n'click adventure, perhaps he'll get lucky, after all.

Yup, controlling Larry, you lurch from scrape to scrape in search of true love. Starting in a seedy club, Larry's adventures lead him towards a brief encounter with the woman of his dreams - one Passionate Patty. To do this, the mouse is used to select and use objects from his inventory and to move him in and out of the assorted buildings.

The game's puzzles aren't exactly troublesome, but Larry's first adventure is certainly showing its age. The graphics are rough, but these aren't half as bad as the parser and the control system. Getting Larry close enough to an object to pick it up is extremely frustrating. In addition, if you miss out on an object at the start of the game, the repercussions of this may not become apparent until much later which means you might as well restart! It seems pretty obvious KIXX will be releasing the sequel some time in the future, so make sure you get that. Larry definitely deserves a meeting, but not in his dated debut form. [SB]

OVERALL 61%

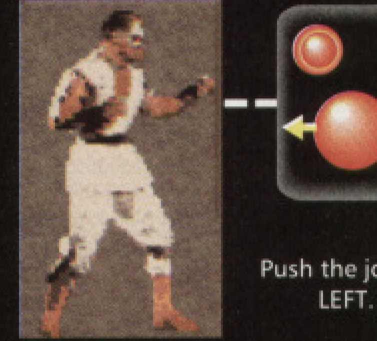


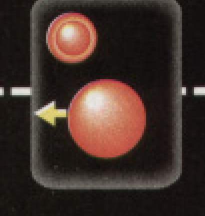
Only the very best tips make it into the Kill Zone. Every morning, just before sunrise, Dave, Simon and Matt are up and about, collecting only the juiciest tips and ensuring that they're deep-frozen within ten minutes of picking to ensure that they reach you fresh and full of flavour. Kill Zone tips... Sweet as the moment... Sweet as the moment when the pod went pop!

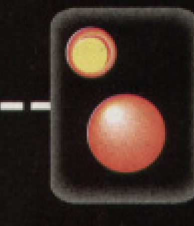
MORTAL KOMBAT

Feeling strong? Come on then - why not try out these death moves for Virgin's stunning coin-op conversion of Mortal Kombat if you're so bleedin' 'aaaard! (Note: These tips assume that you're opponent is standing to the right of your character. If your opponent is on your left, reverse the horizontal (i.e. left and right joystick moves. Okay?)

KANO


Push the joystick LEFT...

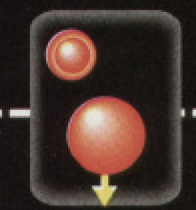

...and LEFT again...

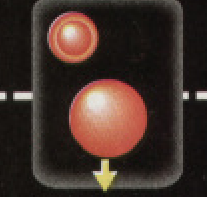

...now tap FIRE!

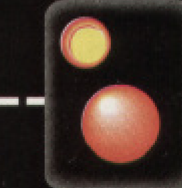


SCORPION




Pull the joystick DOWN...


...and DOWN again...



...now tap FIRE!



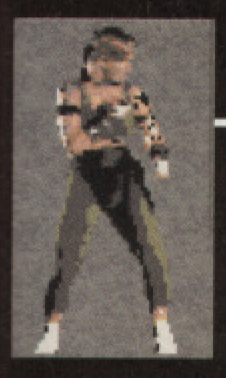
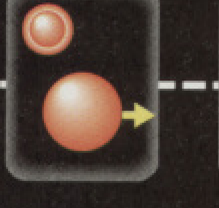
RAIDEN

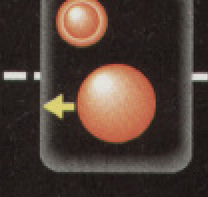
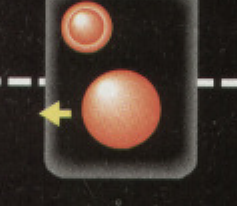





Push the joystick RIGHT... ...then push it LEFT... ...and LEFT again... ...and LEFT again... ...now tap FIRE!

SONYA

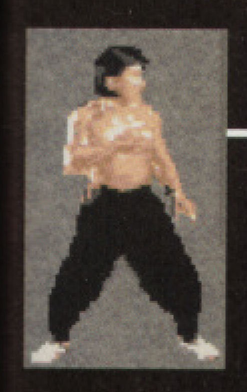
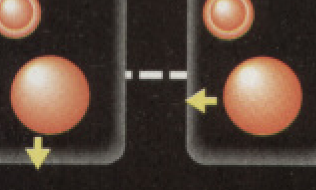



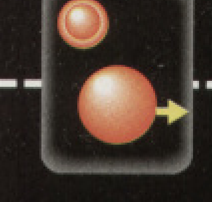
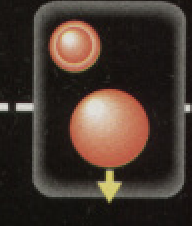
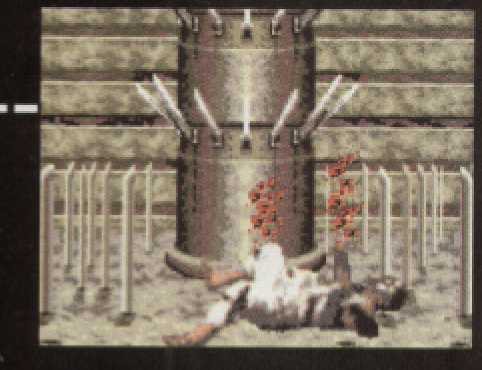





Push the joystick RIGHT... ...and RIGHT again... ...then push it LEFT... ...and LEFT again... ...now tap FIRE!

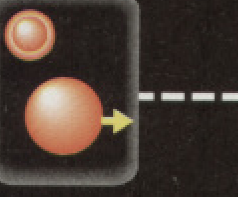
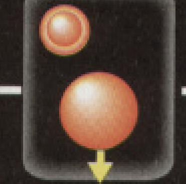
LIU KANG

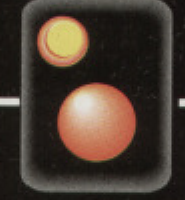



Pull the joystick DOWN... ...then push it LEFT... ...then push it UP... ...then push it RIGHT... ...finally pull it DOWN again!

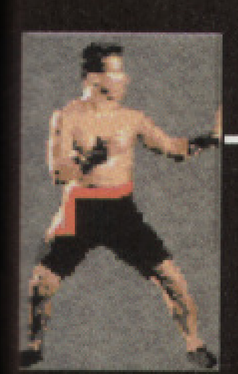
SUB-ZERO

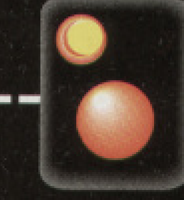



Push the joystick RIGHT... ...then pull it DOWN... ...then push it RIGHT... ...now tap FIRE!

JOHNNY CAGE





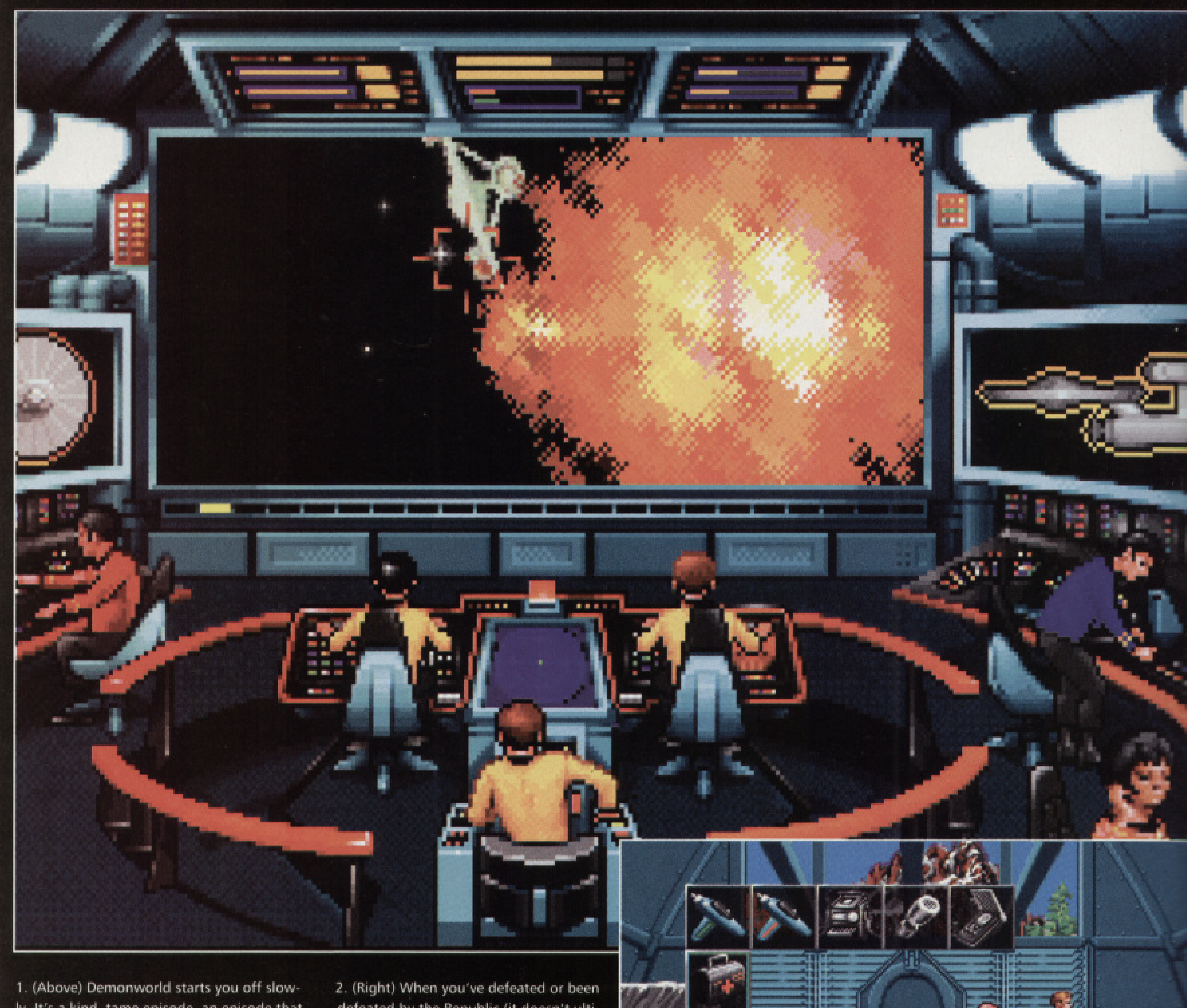


Push the joystick RIGHT... ...and RIGHT again... ...and RIGHT again... ...now tap FIRE!

STAR TREK

Problems with the Romulans? Finding that the warp engines "cannae take it, captain"? Worry no longer as we beam you down for a friendly starter's guide to Interplay's Star Trek

DEMONWORLD

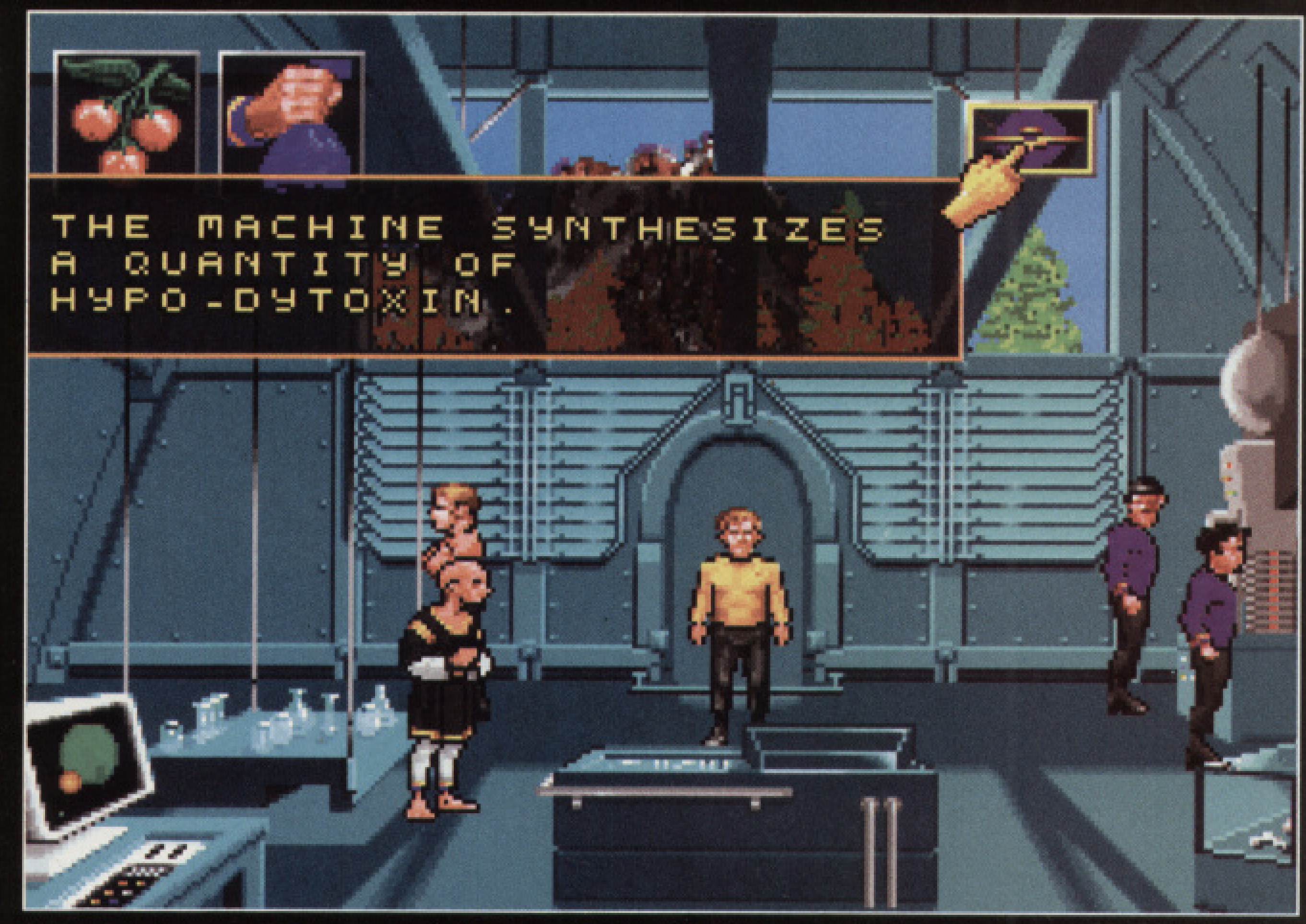


1. (Above) Demonworld starts you off slowly. It's a kind, tame episode, an episode that takes you gently by the hand and familiarises you with some of the actions and procedures that you're going to need later on in the game. The first of these is, of course, combat. Raise your shields, arm your weapons and move that cross-hair around like mad. Shoot, shoot, shoot!

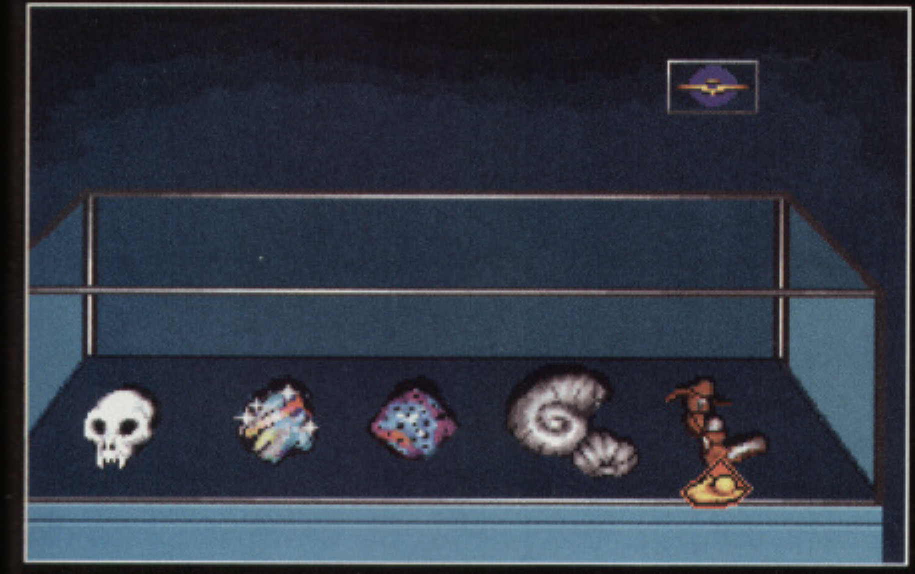
2. (Right) When you've defeated or been defeated by the Republic (it doesn't ultimately matter), beam down to the planet and talk to the waiting priest. He'll tell you about his demon problems and being the kind, easy-going guy that you are, you'll decide to help him. Enter the southern building and talk to the settlers. Use McCoy to treat the wounded man.



3. (Above) Apparently there's some handy medicinal berries up at the old mine entrance so leave the building and walk north. When you get to the entrance use the stun phaser (the green one) to, er, surprisingly enough, stun all the Klingons. Try and do this as quickly as possible otherwise your poor security guard will be checking into Death Central. Pick up the hand and then walk north to get the berries. Don't go into the cave just yet, turn around and return to the village.



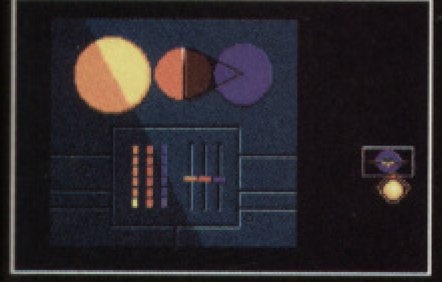
4. (Right) Enter the northern building at the landing site and use the berries with the synthesiser to make a quantity of hypo-toxin. Take the toxin and go back to the southern building. Use the toxin on the settler. Once he's fighting fit, return to the northern building.



5. Use the severed Klingon hand with the workbench and Spock will jury-rig the damaged electronics. Next select the USE icon and click on the glass case in the corner. Talk to the priest and get him to tell you about the twist of metal. Quit out of the conversation, select the GET icon and click on the case again. Pick up only the twist of metal (on the right) - everything else is useless.



6. Now you've finished in the village so leave the building and walk back north to the mine entrance. Keep going north into the mine until you come to a rock fall. Select the kill phaser (the red one) and use it on the rocks. When you've cleared them, use McCoy on the wounded colonist and then use the Klingon hand on the panel next to the door. Voilá - the door will open and you can enter the heart of the mine.



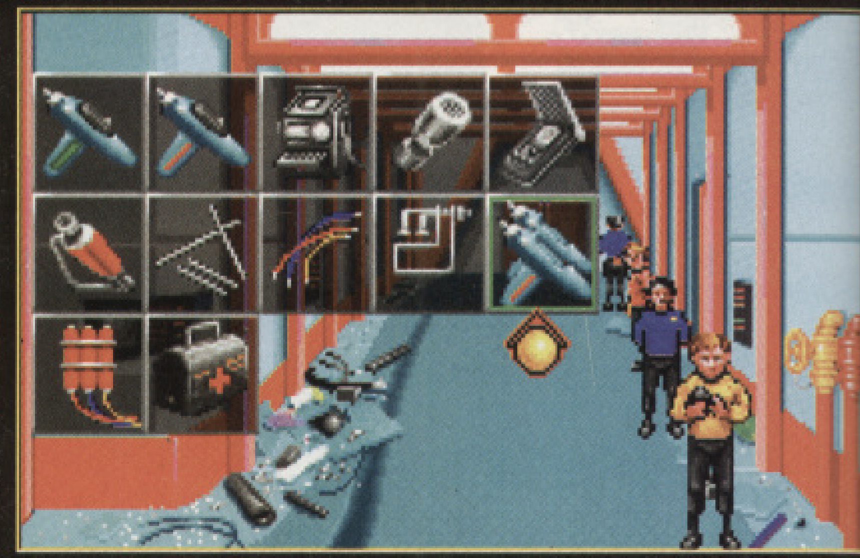
7. Once inside the alien room, use Kirk on the panel below the artwork and set all the levers to the centre (as in the picture above). An alien will appear and so greet him politely in the name of the Federation. When he asks for help, give him the twist of metal. All that now remains is the beam up sequence and the witty moralistic bit. Hmmmm, let's move on.

HIJACKED

1. After defeating the Elasi pirate ship, hail the Masada and respond with conversation choices #1, #2 and #1. Talk to Spock and use the computer to find the Masada's prefix code. Send this code using Uhura and once the shields are down, beam over the landing party. In the transporter room use McCoy on the crew member and take the tools from the workspace. Use Spock on the damaged transporter controls and exit the room to the east.

(Continued over the page.)





2. In the corridor get the trash on the right and enter the brig (also on the right). Next quickly draw your stun phaser and shoot the two Elasi guards. Now for the clever bit. There's a bomb attached to the door so if you don't want to waste the crew, use Spock on the wires under the control panel and then on the control panel itself. Once you've freed the crew, pick up the bomb and go back into the corridor.

3. Now to take control. Use the red phaser with the phaser welder and then use the welder near the bridge door (slightly to the left and close to the ground should do the trick). Go through the door and talk to the pirates. Respond to their yacking with choice #3. Then Security will arrive and you'll have finished another episode. Wipe your brow, sit up straight and move along to a labour of love...

LOVE'S LABOUR JEOPARDISED



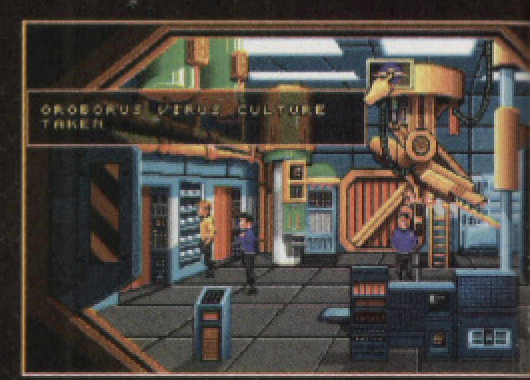
1. (Above) Beam down to the ARK-7 station and use both Spock and McCoy on the computer. Use Spock on the computer again and read the files. Now gather your crew and head north through the breached door.



2. (Right) Use Kirk on the cabinet to the far left and take the anti-gravity sled. Go east and then north.

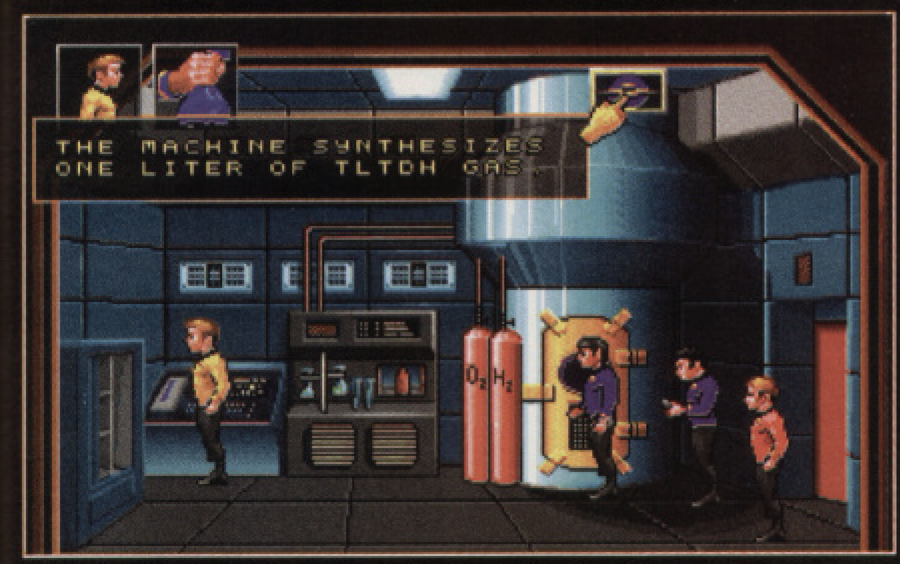


3. (Left) Get the wrench and use it on the panel below the computer on the far left. Get the insulation. Use Kirk on the grill on the right and - hey presto! - you've found a ventilation shaft. Finally open the access panel and use the wrench on the nozzle of the N2 container. Use the handy anti-grav sled that you picked up with the N2 and pick it up. Walk south into the lab.

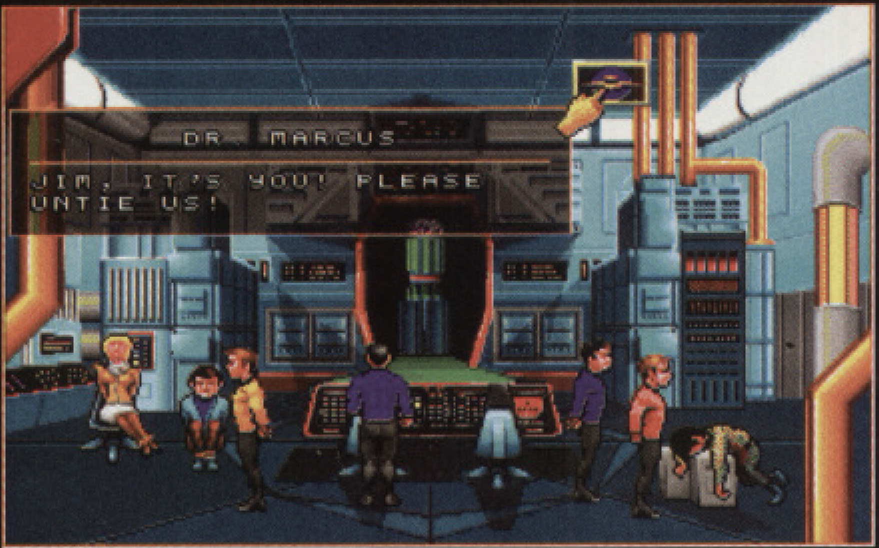


4. (Above) In the lab use the insulation wires with the distillation unit and use the unit t get some polycarbonate. Next open the freezer unit on the right to get the all-importan virus sample. Now wander cheerily west for the complicated bi





5. First of all use the wrench on the nozzles above the two containers. Use the polycarbonate on the sample door of the synthesiser and then use the synthesiser itself. Get the TLTDH canister that is produced. Now use the wrench on the nozzles to turn off the gas flow and use the anti-grav sled to remove the O2 container. Replace it with the N2 bottle and turn on the flow again using the wrench. Use the synthesiser and get the Ammonia canister. Go east.



6. Use the virus sample on the reproducer and attach the Ammonia canister to the nozzle. Use McCoy on the reproducer and get the cure. Nip back west and use the cure on the sample door. Next use the synthesiser and pick up the syringe. Use the syringe on Spock. Go east and north and use the TLTDH canister on the air vent. Go south again and use the ladder. Walk north, untie the prisoners, use the syringe on the Romulan captain and let him go by using the appropriate choice.

ANOTHER FINE MESS



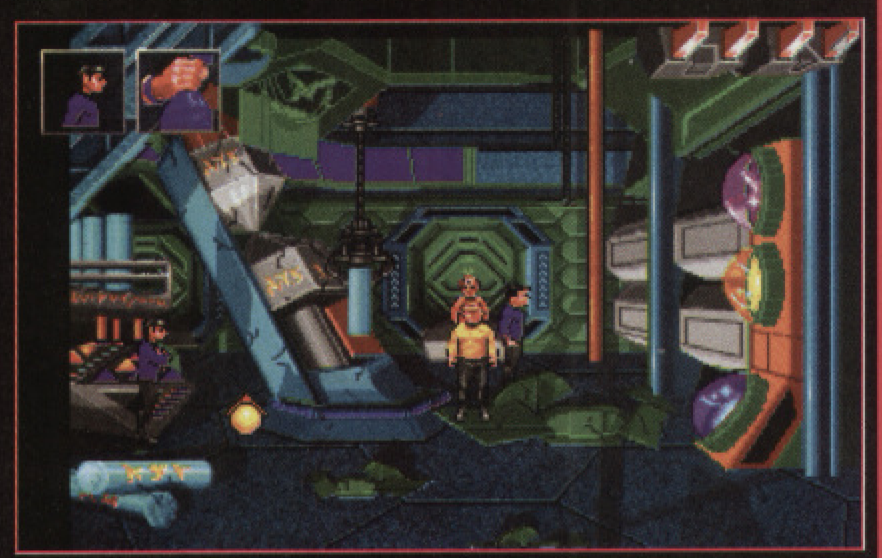
1. Once you've destroyed the two Elasi ships, journey to the Harrapa system to find the alien vessel. Beam down to the ship and talk to Harry Mudd. Pick up the polyhedron, the degreaser and a small lens from the floor. Walk north three locations until you get to the ship's bridge.



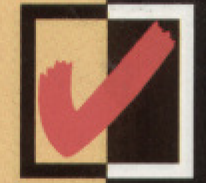
2. Get the piece of engineering equipment and use old pointy-ears on the control panel to see what he can make of it. After Spock and Bones bicker, wander south-west.



3. Use Spock on the big, yellow polyhedron thingy in the middle of the room. Next use the tricorder on it and Spock and Bones will link up and scan it. Use the small polyhedron you found with the big polyhedron to download the information and then head east.



4. To activate the weapon in this room simply use Spock on the blue triangle buttons. When the device has been loaded, use Spock again on the red/pink triangle buttons above the blue ones. Select choice #2 (to beam the device aboard the Enterprise) and go north.





5. Harry's finally flipped his lid (thanks to a little alien virus). Use Spock on him (the famous Vulcan neck pinch, no less) and get the medicine from the small containers above the control panel. Use the medicine on the control panel and then use McCoy on Mudd to cure him.



6. Walk north to the computer room - the one with the big polyhedron in the centre - and talk to Mudd again. Use either choice. Walk east and then go south past the beam down location to the life support machine.



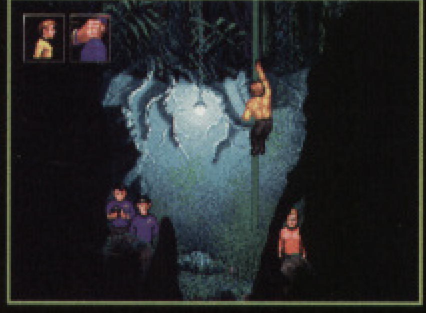
7. Examine the machine and then use the tricorder on it. Next use the engineering tool on it and walk back north to the bridge. Use Kirk on the control panel and use choices #1, #3 and #1. Beam off and that is that.

THE FEATHERED SERPENT



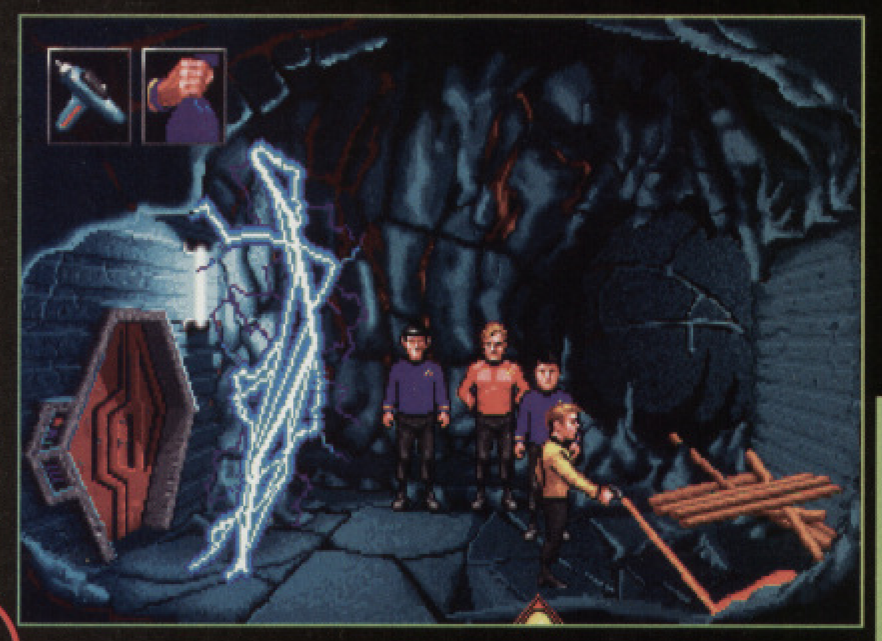


1. Gun those warp engines and nip nimbly across to the Digifal system. Choose options #2 and #1. Enter a standard planetary orbit and consult the computer about Zamphor and Digifal. Beam down to the planet. Talk to Quetzecoatl and select choices #1, #2 and #1.



2. Pick up the rock and use it on the small hole in the wall near the snake. Now take the snake. After this pick up another rock and throw it at the vine - this will nudge it down a bit. Use another rock on the vines and then use them. Go west.

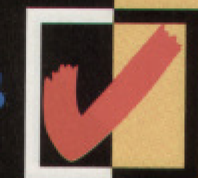
3. (Above) Cross the log and use the snake on the native Tlaoxac. Next use the snake on Kirk and take the dagger. Go west. Use the dagger on the fern and then use the fern on the monster in the river. Walk across the log to the west. Use the dagger on the red crystal and leave to the west. Once back on the ship go to the Hrakkour system.



4. (Left) On the surface walk to the centre of the room and select choices #1 and #1. Use the red phaser on the ground near the rods, pick up a rod and use it on the molten rock. Use the rod on the alien. Use the tricorder on the door mechanism (on the left), use the communicator and pick choices #2 and #1. Use Spock on the door control. Inside pick up the three green gems and put them in the pedestal's holes. When the yellow light comes on, walk into it. Opt for choice #3.

NEXT MONTH!

Now you've plucked the Feathered Serpent, get ready next month to swing past that old Devil Moon and indulge in a little Vengeance.



WIZ 'N' LIZ

Yes! Because you demanded them - well, we're sure at least one of you did, once - here are the recipes for all the spells in Psyggy's smart run-'n'-collect romp. The recipes printed in bold give you access to various sub-games, while the rest award you bonuses or produce weird 'n' wacky effects. Give 'em a whirl!



Apple - Apple	Free bonus letter.
Apple - Strawberry	Opens exit door (or awards points).
Apple - Banana	Opens shop (or awards points).
Apple - Orange	Fruit randomiser.
Apple - Carrot	5,000 points.
Apple - Potato	Friendship spell.
Apple - Cabbage	Time doubler (once only).
Apple - Mango	75 stars.
Apple - Lemon	100,000 points.
Apple - Onion	Magic Ruby.
Apple - Pear	Me and my shadow!
Apple - Cherry	150 stars.
Apple - Avocado	Toggle Grassland door.
Apple - Mushroom	Fruit returner spell.
Avocado - Avocado	All bonus letters given.
Avocado - Mushroom	Extra life.
Banana - Banana	Oh no! It's Lemmings!
Banana - Orange	Absolutely nothing!
Banana - Carrot	50 stars.
Banana - Potato	Open hint shop (or awards points).
Banana - Cabbage	Sale spell.
Banana - Mango	Toggle Templeland door.
Banana - Lemon	Turns fruit into time.
Banana - Onion	Catch!
Banana - Pear	Turns fruit into points.
Banana - Cherry	Tortoise.
Banana - Avocado	45 seconds extra time.
Banana - Mushroom	Slow timer.
Cabbage - Cabbage	**Letter Basher.**
Cabbage - Mango	25,000 stars.
Cabbage - Lemon	No invisible letters.
Cabbage - Onion	5 seconds extra time.
Cabbage - Pear	Toggle Deadland door.
Cabbage - Cherry	Shadow lands.
Cabbage - Avocado	50,000 points.
Cabbage - Mushroom	**Wabbitoids.**
Carrot - Carrot	Sound test.
Carrot - Potato	20 seconds extra time.
Carrot - Cabbage	Diddley squat.
Carrot - Mango	A bunch of bananas!
Carrot - Lemon	80 stars.
Carrot - Onion	Fruit preserver spell.
Carrot - Pear	**Wabbit Invaders.**
Carrot - Cherry	1 star and 100,000 pts.
Carrot - Avocado	5 stars.
Carrot - Mushroom	Turns fruit into stars.
Cherry - Cherry	**'Bounce'.**
Cherry - Avocado	Fruit increaser spell.
Cherry - Mushroom	Skip-a-level spell
Lemon - Lemon	Swap bonus letters.
Lemon - Onion	Random extra points.
Lemon - Pear	Double stars (in level).
Lemon - Cherry	Disassembly clue.
Lemon - Avocado	1 star.
Lemon - Mushroom	1 second and 300 stars.
Mango - Mango	Double time icons.
Mango - Lemon	Random extra stars.
Mango - Onion	Toggle Desertland door.
Mango - Pear	100 stars.
Mango - Cherry	1 second extra time.
Mango - Avocado	Ha ha!
Mango - Mushroom	250,000 points.
Mushroom - Mushroom	Magic Sapphire.
Onion - Onion	No dying wabbits.
Onion - Pear	Magic mushrooms.
Onion - Cherry	20,000 points.
Onion - Avocado	125 stars.
Onion - Mushroom	'Cheeseburger'!
Orange - Orange	1 point.
Orange - Carrot	Blue Wabbits.
Orange - Potato	**Snakes Alive!**
Orange - Cabbage	Confucius.
Orange - Mango	Random extra time!
Orange - Lemon	**Chance.**
Orange - Onion	30 seconds extra time.
Orange - Pear	40 seconds extra time.
Orange - Cherry	Toggle Lunarland door.
Orange - Avocado	10,000 points.
Orange - Mushroom	**Tube Skiing.**
Pear - Pear	**Finder.**
Pear - Cherry	175 stars.
Pear - Avocado	200 stars.
Pear - Mushroom	50 seconds extra time.
Potato - Potato	Toggle Treeland door.
Potato - Cabbage	Game over?
Potato - Mango	Magic Emerald.
Potato - Lemon	**Guesser.**
Potato - Onion	Not a sausage.
Potato - Pear	**Gold Rush.**
Potato - Cherry	Toggle Mineland door.
Potato - Avocado	Toggle Snowland door.
Potato - Mushroom	250 stars.
Strawberry - Strawberry	10 seconds extra time.
Strawberry - Banana	Magic Diamond.
Strawberry - Orange	**Splat those dudes!**
Strawberry - Carrot	Point doubler (once only).
Strawberry - Potato	Wed Wabbits.
Strawberry - Cabbage	Gween Wabbits.
Strawberry - Mango	**Wheelspin.**
Strawberry - Lemon	'Trip-a-tron'.
Strawberry - Onion	Stormy weather!
Strawberry - Pear	**What's that pong?!**
Strawberry - Cherry	Stars x2 (once only).
Strawberry - Avocado	Double bonus.
Strawberry - Mushroom	1 pt and 60 secs.

You've read the review, bought the game so now try out the tips, with this, the start of our definitive solution to AdventureSoft's impressive debut.

SIMON THE SORCERER

LET US BEGIN...

The best thing to do in the early stages of Simon is have a good wander around. Taking time out to be nosy means that not only will you discover most of the locations but you will also get a good idea of what tasks must be completed and what objects you should be looking for.

Simon's quest begins in the small, quiet village of Fleur Deli and by the time you've had a poke around you should have found the following objects: a magnet and a pair of scissors (wizard's cottage); a rope and a bell clapper (blacksmith's forge); a ladder, a specimen jar and a cold remedy (druid's house). Get the matches in the tavern and, while you're there, use the hairdressing scissors to snip off the dwarf's beard.

There's nothing like a good wander, that's what I say, and once you've made it into the forest there's a whole host of things waiting to be discovered. Get the feather from the owl and the whistle from the crying barbarian (which you use to get over the troll bridge). Get the bucket of water from the well at the evil witch's cottage, the metal detector from the woodcutter, the shopping list from under a stone at the Goblin village and don't forget to chat to the paleantologist working down his hole.

Talk to the oaf, pour water on his beans and pick them up from the puddle. When you reach Repulser's Tower use the bell clapper with the bell and move it. When the hair falls, climb up and talk to Repulser who'll eventually turn into a pig. Lastly, when you dine chez Swampling, ask for a second bowl of stew and use the stew with the specimen jar. Keep eating until the Swampling leaves. Oh, don't forget to talk to the woodworm.

Okay, now we've got you this far let's get down to some real adventuring...



1. MELONS IN THE AIR

In the village go behind the wizard's house to the compost heap. Use the magic beans with the compost to get a watermelon. Use the melon with the sousaphone (above) and then go to the giant and use the Sousaphone.



2. PIGS LOVE CHOC

At the cottage use Repulser the pig with the chocolate door. When she chews a hole in it, go inside and pick up the beekeeper's hat and the smokebox. Use the smokebox on the beehive and get the beeswax.



4. THE MINE

(Above) Get the small rock outside and read the password on it. Wear the beard and enter the cave. Try to walk past the guard on the left-hand side. When he bars your way, offer him the beer as a bribe. He'll make you carry it down into the Ale Room.

3. MINE'S A PINT

(Below) Once you have the wax, chat to the landlord and order any drink you fancy. As he ducks behind the bar, use the wax with the left-hand beer barrel to block up the tap. The barman will take the barrel outside. He'll also give you a beer voucher.



5. SHORT CHANGED

I(Below) n the Ale Room, use the feather on the sleeping dwarf and get the key. Go up the stairs and down the steps on the left. Pick up the hook and use the key on the door. Go in, and offer the dwarf the beer voucher. He will give you a gem.



6. YE OLDE SHOPPE

(Above) Talk to the dodgy geezer in the village square. Offer him the gem and get 20 gold pieces for it. With your new found wealth pop into the shop. Give in the shopping list and buy the hammer (free nail included) and the bottle of white spirit (circled below).



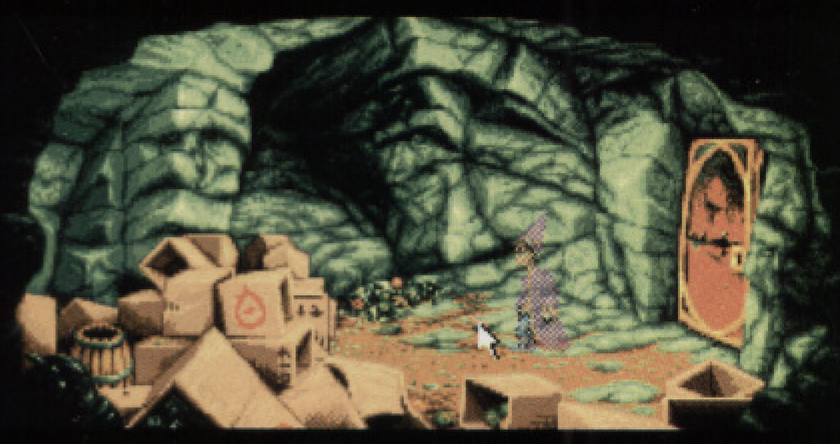
7. THE DRAGON'S CAVE

(Below) Wander into the cave and use the cold remedy on the dragon. When the dragon is dozing, nip inside again and grab the handily placed fire extinguisher. Outside, use the hook on the boulder and climb up. Use the magnet with the rope and dangle it down the hole to get even more money. You need at least 30 gold pieces to be inducted as a wizard later on.



8. THE TOLKIEN FAN CLUB

(Above) The shopkeeper won't make up the shopping until you have enough items to complete the Goblin village. Go to the crossroads and north to the gorge. Click on the vines to go down. Give Gollum the stew and he'll give you the fishing rod. You will then fish for the magic ring.

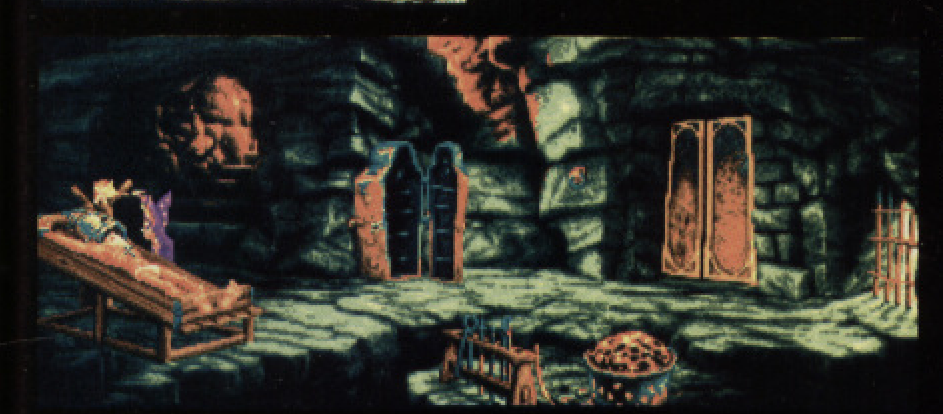


9. THE GOBLIN VILLAGE

(Above) Return to the village shop, open the box of shopping and you'll be taken inside Goblin Central. In the storeroom search the boxes to find your spellbook. Open the spellbook to find a scrap of paper and pick up the rat bone. Use the paper under the door and use the rat bone with the lock. Now just pick up the paper to get the key.

NEXT MONTH!

The fun continues with the second and final part of this complete solution to STS!



10. THERE'S A HOLE IN MY BUCKET

Wearing the ring, nip past the goblin guard (picking up the bucket first) and go down to the druid. Remove the ring and talk to the druid until you discover his 'werefrog' tendencies. Pick up the mints and the firebrand. Use the bucket with the druid and then the firebrand with the druid. Hide in the Iron Maiden to escape the goblins.



SNIP TIPS

I love tips, me. Especially as writing them helps keep me in gainful employment and off the streets. If you fancy helping a good cause (i.e. me) and maybe winning a top software prize in the process then get scribbling to: *Mr* Tips, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Cheers.

DISPOSABLE HERO
Gremlin

Rob Howe from Bristol is trying to do me out of a job. Not a day goes by without him informing me of a new cheat for some of the latest games and this month he's come up trumps with no less than three beauties, the first of which is for Gremlin's tasty shoot-'em-up. So here we go, then...

Go to the high score table, hold down the left mouse button (make sure you've got a mouse plugged in otherwise it's a bit of a pointless exercise) and type EUPHORIA. When you return to the main screen you should discover that there is an additional menu from which you can pretty much tailor the game to suit your needs. Got that? Marvellous.

ZOOL 2
Gremlin

Fed up with trying to beat Mental Block using your own skill? Then why not cheat, cheat, cheat? Don't know the cheat? Tired of all these questions? Want to get on with it? Really? Okay then.

Go to the options screen, type BUMBLEBEE and start the game as normal. Right. Now, whenever you feel like it, press RETURN to skip levels. Just remember this, though: you've spent over £25 on this game. Do you really want to skip through it? I thought so.



MORTAL KOMBAT
Virgin

I must admit to never having played this conversion or its arcade Grandad, so when Stephen Smithett from Haynes informed me of this little cheat I could barely understand a word he was saying. Perhaps you will.



Stephen reckons that: "If you want to fight Reptile, who's a cross between Sub-Zero and Scorpion, play a one-player game controlling either Kano, Sub-Zero, Johnny Cage or Raiden. On the Pit Level, defeat your opponent double floorless, perform the death move (see elsewhere for details of those) and you'll be whisked away to a mini arena beneath the spikes. Here's where Reptile lives and if you manage to beat him you'll be rewarded with a hefty points bonus. Good, eh?"

CANNON FODDER
Virgin

A number of people have written in with this little cheat so my heart-felt thanks go out to you all, especially Leon Johnson from Sinnington (I think) and L. Townsend from Llanymynech (what's the betting on that spelling being correct?) who were among the first to write in. Cheers-ears!

Load up the game and go to the Save Game option. When the game requests a name, enter JOOLS. If you've done this correctly (and, let's face it, it's not hard, is it?) then 'Cheat Mode Active' will flash at the bottom of the screen and the ranks and abilities of your men will have increased. Blimey Charlie, as someone from out of Neighbours once said.

JURASSIC PARK
Ocean

Darren Wheatcroft from Matlock wins a software prize for his great level codes to the A1200 version of Ocean's great, if plodding at times, film conversion. He hopes these codes help me and my readers out so I think we all owe this galant young gamer a bit of respect. We'll have a minute's silence before we continue, shall we?

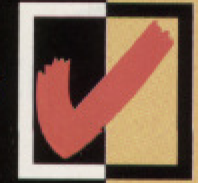
Right, who made the farty noises? See me after school assembly, will you? Okay, here are those codes...

B5A48352
E54C67AA
D5F4AB62
95B48B42
85A4834A
85B48B42
F54C6FAA
C57C77B2
D56C7FBA
A5149F5A

BOB'S BAD DAY
Psygnosis

Clichéd opening sentences - love 'em or loathe 'em, you can't ignore 'em. They're like level codes in a way, although I'd never ignore them because there's nothing I like better than to type 50 lines of gibberish (as you've probably noticed by now). So hearty thanks go out to Simon Stevens from Highcliffe for supplying me with this month's fix. There'll be more next month!

1	ZAABCZOD	26	TOPGGWPH
2	ZBFBCYPD	27	TOPGGWOH
3	ZBFBCYOD	28	TEAGGVNH
4	ZXKBCXND	29	SDPGGWQH
5	YBFBCYQD	30	SEAGGVPH
6	YCKCCXPD	31	SEAHHVOI
7	YCKCDXOE	32	SFFHHUNI
8	YCPCDWNE	33	RBFHHYQI
9	XBFCDYQE	34	RCKHHPXI
10	XCKCKXPE	35	RCKHHXOI
11	XCKDDXOE	36	RDPIHWNI
12	XDPDDWNE	37	OCKIIXQJ
13	WCKDEXQF	38	QDPIIWPJ
14	WDPDEWPF	39	QDPIIWOJ
15	WDPDEWOF	40	QEAIIVNJ
16	WEAEEVNF	41	PCKJIXQJ
17	VBFEEXPF	42	PDPJIWPJ
18	VCKEEXPF	43	PDPJJWOK
19	VCKEFXOG	44	PEAJJVNK
20	VDPEFWNG	45	ODPJJWQK
21	UCKFFXQG	46	OEAKJVPK
22	UDPFFWPG	47	OEAKJVOK
23	UDPFFWOG	48	OFFKJUNK
24	VEAFFYNG	49	NCKKKXOI
25T	CKFGXQH	50	NDPKKWPL



GAMES SURGERY

1994 is well and trul-hic!-y underway, and Matt The Medic appears to have recovered from 'accidentally' drinking all the alchohol, so it's business as usual. The doctor will see you now...

Dear Matt The Medic,
In the December issue of The One you gave a demo of ALIEN BREED 2. I have a query for you - is there a cheat to get unlimited cash, ammo and medic packs?

Simon Pyper.

Thanks to Ralf Bosz from The Netherlands, I am able to offer you the latest in cheat codes. For unlimited energy, ammo, credits and more, try... 098654, 736353, 243433, 378829 and 000000.

Dear Matt,
I have just bought DESERT STRIKE and find it just too hard to play at all, even with the cheat 'Hardcase' which gives me infinite Hellfires. Could you please give me a cheat for infinite lives, fuel, etc?

Mark Bowes,
Co. Durham.

I've had a little chat with my mate Mr Tips, and though we can't offer you infinite lives and all that stuff we can help you get to see a few more levels with these codes: LQJAQRJ, TLJJOAQ and JTEKOM.

Dear Matt,
In MONKEY ISLAND 2, how do you get to the cottage on Phatt Island? I've tried everything I can think of on the waterfall and pump but nothing works. Please help me as I've only got one map piece to find.

Neil Millin,
Merseyside.

Nil problemo! Walk to the top of the waterfall until you get to the pump and use the monkey on it. Now walk back to where a large hole should have appeared - and there's your cottage. But what do you do when you get there...?

Dear Matt,
Please could you help me. In MONKEY ISLAND 2 I can get past the waterfall and into a cottage, but all I do is go in and get drunk. What do I do next?

Benjamin Procter,
Leicester.

You're actually not a million miles from the correct solution, but once you've entered the drinking contest, make sure that you pour your grog into the pot plant. Once the pirate collapses, you need to have a fiddle with the mirror, the frame and the shutters. I'll say no more....

Dear Almighty Matt,
In GOBLIINS 2 how the @*$% do you get Fingus and Winkle down the well? I've got the diving suits, kindelixer, stool, false teeth and mayonnaise, but what do I do next?

Alan McDonald,
Scotland.

You're certainly a lad who knows how to start his letters, aren't you? Gobliins 2 can be fairly illogical (captain), so...

Get Winkle to enter the tunnel and press a button that will open a secret door near the monster. Now get Winkle to lift the hatch to reveal another button and get Fingus to press it quickly - opening the door into the monster. Get Fingus to enter the tunnel and press another button to open the monster's mouth.

As soon as this happens, get Winkle to go through the door and shout at Schwarzy who'll be so shocked that he'll become momentarily stunned. While he's in this state, get Fingus to use the stool on the hoist and hitch him up. Now make Winkle use the false teeth on him before throwing the anvil at him (before he comes up).

The well cover will now get lifted, so each Gobliin can put on his diving suit and take a dive down to the next world. Lumme! What a strange solution. It works though.

Dear Matt,
I'm unable to escape the jaws of the Tyrannosaurus Rex on the Gallimimus level of JURASSIC PARK. I've tried many things but all have failed and I'm still stuck on this after many attempts - please help.

Paul Brabbins,
Wolverhampton.

The main thing to remember here is that you must push the oil barrel off the cliff early on in the level (i.e. before you even get near the T-Rex). You also need to collect the flares "Malcolm! Don't move!" and never waste them. Now, when T-Rex chases you, wait until he's just about to eat you, then turn around and lob a flare. This will distract him for a second, allowing you to run ahead. When he closes in again repeat the process.

If you've managed to get to the end of the passage with one flare left, you'll come to a pit with the smashed oil barrel in it - chuck the last flare in and stand well back. If you've timed everything correctly (and remembered to drop the oil barrel) a huge wall of flame will repel the T-Rex and you're okay (for a while at least). You really need to perfect your timing with the flares or you'll find yourself running out before you get to the pit. Just remember to wait 'till the last minute before throwing them. Dwooky.

Dear Matt The Medic,
On SUPERFROG I can only get to World 2, Stage 4. Can you tell me the level codes to both Worlds 4 and 5? I would be most grateful.

Stuart Bowden,
Kenton, Devon.

A quick glance back through the Snip Tips of time reveals a fair bucketfull of saucy codes for World 4 at least, so here you go: 467464, 818234, 182394 and 298383.

MATT'S SHOW-OFF SHELF

Thanks again to all the people that have sent in solutions. Sod's law though - I always get tons of letters answering the same query! Keep 'em coming though. Ta

MEDICATION REQUIRED

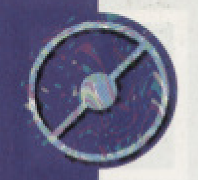
• Matt Innes from Co. Durham wants to know how to get into the castle in Lure Of The Temptress.
• Simon Pyper (you've seen him once on this page already) also wants to know if anyone has found out how to get past Level 5 on our Bob's Bad Day demo (don't look at me - I just work here.)

FREE PRESCRIPTIONS

• Nurse Jarrod Smith offers this soothing advice to Simon Sleeman on MAGICLAND DIZZY: You need to use the bucket of water on Dozy to wake him up.

THE SURGERY IS NOW CLOSED

Yep, that's all folks. Don't despair though, I'll be back at the same time next month with more medicinal offerings - so get your probs into: Matt The Medic, Games Surgery, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Please don't phone in or send SAEs as I can't answer your queries personally and, to be quite frank, I'm sick of the sight of stamps. Cheers.



There's only one thing better than the start of a new year, and that's the start of a new PD Zone. Matt Broughton opens the front door and invites top software to sit by his fire.







INVADERS 2
Logic PD,
Mental Image Vol. 2



When I was a youngster, I used to get very excited about the old Atari VCS consoles (that was when consoles were consoles) and, in particular, the 'action thrills' that were to be found in such games as Ms Pacman, Spiderman, and The Empire Strikes Back. This latter sprang to mind when I saw this game, and a quick glance at the screen shots will probably tell you why (if you're old enough to know what the hell I'm talking about in the first place that is!)

Invaders 2 is the follow up to Invaders (no!) and is basically the same game as before only with some new features and some more attractive graphics.

You must protect your home base against a convoy of heavy destroyers that are slowly but surely making their way across the barren landscape with only one thing in mind - to destroy the aforementioned base. You start at the far right the area, and can monitor the enemy's progress using a Defender-like scanner that runs along the base of the screen. You have only the simplest of lasers and a limited amount of shields to use in your attack, and in honesty, strategy isn't really going to be necessary at any point in the game - just fly towards each destroyer and shoot it as many times as you possibly can.

Each hit is rewarded with a shower of metal as you gradually peel away each layer of the destroyer's hull, until it finally gives up and plumets to the ground in a ball of fire and smoke. It's not quite as simple as that though, as not only will the destroyers be firing at you, but each one also has a protective scout (an addition from Invaders 1) which will stay firmly by the destroyer's side doubling the amount of fire coming your way, not to mention doubling the amount of targets for your attack craft to destroy.

Other items in the area include houses to be protected, radar dishes which can be destroyed by the enemy to disable your scanner, and a number of ground targets which fire verticaly and diagonally across the sky.

Every now and then a support craft will pass overhead and drop more shield power which can be added to your ship's supply by manoeuvering under the supply crate.

This is a very simple game, and is quite unfair in how many targets it expects your craft to dispatch, but is quite nicely presented with some neat touches here and there. Possibly worth a look at.

OVERALL 71%

OPERATION FIRESTORM
17 Bit Software,
Disk 2837



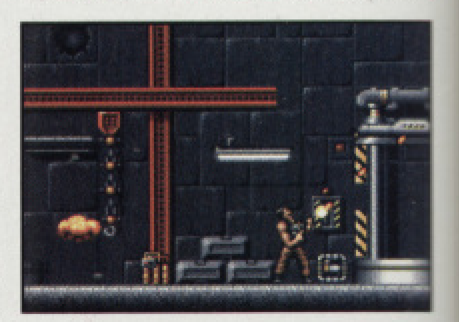
Do you remember Wibble World Giddy? Of course you do! Well, this is from the author of Giddy, and though not making quite such an impressive impact, it may well appeal to a fair number of you who don't enjoy cute games, but grin in a nasty and frightening fashion at anything violent.

In classic PD Zone style, I'd like to start my review by asking you to cross X with Y and get a game that is Z, so are you ready? Good, then I'll begin..... Take Fire Force and cross it with Navy Seals, Midnight Rescue and Switch Blade 2 and you're there. Well, sort of anyway.

Operation Firestorm is a good old fashioned 'lone soldier against the world' affair, with you looking ever so slightly Green Berret-ish as you wander across a backdrop of gun turrets, tanks, grade launchers and enemy snipers. As tradition dictates, each level has a set look with a relevant guardian at the end - you may find yourself up against anything from an enormous tank, to a big automated gun in a ball sort of thing (these reviews get more scrappy as time goes by - David.)

You start the game with a simple rifle which can shoot in all angles around your man, but can upgrade your weapon by searching in the many crates that are to be found around the various complexes. These also hide such beauties as extra health and extra lives and can all be collected by shooting the crates and grabbing the icons that appear.

The levels contain a number of different ...er, levels (as in height), meaning that platforms, conveyor belts and





MEGA GAMES 1, 2 and 3

R Nardini

A new batch of compilations have found their way onto my desk - and jolly good they are too - so here's a quick run down of each:

Mega Games 1: featuring Atoms - a fairly well know strategy puzzler, Cybernetix - an excellent Defender clone that's had more than its fair share of coverdisk appearences, Klaktris - an interesting 'colour colums' varient on Tetris, Pacman Delux - need I say more?, Dragon Tiles - er...Dragon Tiles, and Klondike - card games 'r' us.



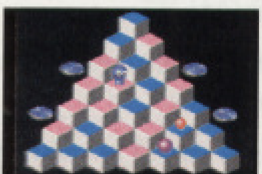
OVERALL: 88%

Mega Games 2: featuring Hellzone - pretty good Nemesis/R-type 'left to right-er', Tanks - classic two player game, and Missile Command - about the best clone you'll see around.



OVERALL: 87%

Mega Games 3: featuring Mega Ball - one of my personal favourite Arkanoid games, Qbic - excellent Q-Bert copy, and Chrome - a very decent puzzle/platform game indeed.



OVERALL: 90%

These compilations come of one disk each and can be bought for £2 per disk, or £5 for all three. Contact Riccardo Nardini, 33 Bank Street, Troon, Ayrshire KA10 6DP.

ladders all make a healthy appearance at some point or another. The main pains come in the form of wall mounted guns and hidden explosives, but as you progress, the enemy soldiers become better equipped and more intelligent, and it won't be long before you're reaching for the biggest gun you can find.

This isn't a particularly original piece of PD, but it's about the most polished offering of its kind out there at the moment and scores very well as far as size and variety of graphics goes. Pretty damn good in other words.

OVERALL 88%

ORK ATTACK

17 Bit Software,

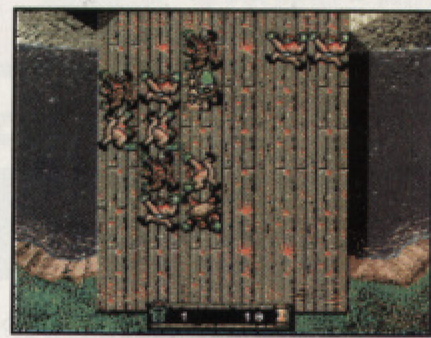
Disk 2838

Oh my word this is silly. It's not very often that a piece of PD software has Mr Upchurch sweating and swearing, but that was before we received Ork Attack. He's just off having a lie down at the moment, so I'll tell you all about it. Well, it started last Thursday...

Orks are roaming the land (which would be fine if it wasn't for the fact that Orks' version of 'roaming' involves collecting peoples' teeth before they've finished using them, not to mention burning lots of donkeys) and as a result the king has been forced to hide away in the very bowels of his castle. Only a few watch towers now remain between the king and the Orks, and there's nothing really left to stop the Orks from scaling the walls and taking what's rightfully not theirs. That is, apart from you.

Yes you're the last knight in the kingdom, and it's down to you and your faithful (if reluctant) squire to keep the Orks from crossing the final barriers that keep the king safe. This won't be easy though, as not only do the Orks outnumber you, but resources are limited and all you have at your disposal are a small number of rocks and, of course, your trusty sword.

The first level of the game sees you at the top of a castle wall, plagued by climbing Orks. You can dispose of these by either collecting a rock from the side of the screen and dropping it on their heads, or by calling for your sword and attacking them when they reach the top (they don't like it up 'em). The real problem with both these tactics is the



time involved in fetching the rock (only one appears on the screen at a time), or the time taken for your squire to throw your sword across the screen to you. It's also important to mention that you can only get a rock once your sword is back with the squire, and vice versa. Once an Ork gets to the top of the screen, he'll run towards you, and unless you get your swing timed just right, will punch you off the wall - game over.

You can set up some excellent chain reactions when chucking rocks, as they'll bounce of an Orks head and happily spank into any others near it on the wall, but once they get too close to the top, it's time to get your sword a'cleaving.

Every now and then, a larger Ork with an exploding staff will make his way up the wall, and can only de dispatched with a rock. Should he get to the top, the staff will go off, and it's game over time again. Get him with a rock though, and it'll explode taking any other Orks on-screen with it.

Once a certain number of Orks have been dealt with, a staff will appear which can be collected and thrown to your squire down below. A bolt of lightening will then flash out, killing all the Orks remaining and taking you off that level and onto the next. In between levels there's a sub-game where you take on the role of the humble squire who has a limited amount of time to sweep the dead Orks bodies into the moat. Lovely.

The following levels get progressively harder, with the Orks increasing in speed and numbers, as well as introducing Orks with helmets that can only be killed once they've reached the top of the wall.

The overall presentation is very professional with tons of between stage animations and sub-screens, and the music and speech samples are also very nice.

The game is only let down by its slightly tricky control method, and by the fact that you only get one life to play with. Other than that, it really is an excellent game idea that has been well polished. I hope the author takes the time to produce a second version with some of these problems ironed out. I'll certainly be waiting. (And so will I - David.)

OVERALL 92%

GORF

17 Bit Software,

Disk 2850

Yep, it's nostalgia time again! Gorf was one of the 'after the first flourish of arcade games, but not before they really got good' titles, taking a number of successful game ideas and bunging them all in one cabinet. Most of Gorf's charm came from the rather large joystick, and the fact that the Gorfian leader 'spoke' to you as you progressed (if you imagine a Dalek with a cold telling you to "Insert coin", you're sort of there). Anyway, for your 4d (or whatever money we used before the revolution) you got to work your way through Space Invaders and Galaxians, plus some new interpretations of similar games.

You guide your laser base in the traditional fashion, and must work your way through four different games before confronting the flag ship, which must then be shot away piece by piece, thus exposing its soft underbelly, and delivering the fatal shot.

This offering is fairly acurate copy, with authentic sounds and graphics, but sadly lacking in the 'crap speech' department. The two games that I haven't mentioned yet involve attacking two groups of ships that protect huge laser guns, and a 'shoot the Gorf as he circles faster and faster from the inside of a circle' affair.

This game is fairly harmless, but a real tear jerker for the old game player. A chunk of history for only a pound.



OVERALL 75%

PD LIKE NEVER B4

- Logic PD, 8/5 Glenalmond Court, Sighthill, Edinburgh EH11 4BE
- 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH. Telephone: (0924) 366982.

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- **The odd crap joke and a spelling mistake or two!**

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● Body Blows Galactic
"Just about the best beat-'em up available."
Simon Byron, The One January 1994.
Overall Score 87%.
Worth £29.99 A1200, £26.99 A500/600.

● Alien Breed 2
"Alien Breed 2 truly is one of the best arcade blasters available... terrific fun to play."
Simon Byron, The One December 1993.
Overall Score 91%.
Worth £29.99 A1200, £26.99 A500/600.

● Superfrog
"Glumph!"
David Upchurch, The One April 1993.
Overall Score 93%.
Worth £26.99.

● Overdrive
Take the driver's seat in 4x4's, Buggies, Supersports and G.P. Cars and race aroung twenty gruelling courses across five different terrains.
Overall Score 83%. Worth £25.99.

● SPECIAL EDITION DOUBLE PACK
Alien Breed Special Edition
"If you didn't pick up Alien Breed the first time around then buy this Special Edition now."
David Upchurch, The One January 1993.
Overall Score 88%
Project X Special Edition
"If you don't already own the full-pricer then don't buy another game until you've snapped up this."
Simon Byron, The One August 1993.
Overall Score 92%.
Worth £21.98.



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BACK ISSUES











Being a person of discerning taste you are no doubt a regular reader of The One, the bible of all that's tops in the heady world of Amiga games. But even so there may well be embarrassing gaps in your collection. Maybe you didn't start reading The One until recently, or perhaps you didn't start reading at all until recently or maybe the newsagent simply ran out of stock - in which case why didn't you place an order?

Whatever, here's your chance to fill in those gaping voids in your magazine-related life. Below you'll find listed all those lovely issues of The One stretching back to May of last year, complete with detailed descriptions of their contents. Be warned that many of them have sold out - we're just so damn popular!

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MAY 1992 - SOLD OUT!

JUNE 1992 - SOLD OUT!

JULY 1992
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of Red Zone and Galactic plus FIVE complete PD games: Battlements, Dragon Tiles, MegaTron, Omega Race and Hollywood Trivia!
WIPPED! Lotus 3, Wing Commander and The Carl Lewis Challenge!
REVIEWED! Lure of the Temptress, Monkey Island 2, Ishar, Striker, Championship Manager and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guides to Parasol Stars, Epic, John Madden Football and Eye of the Beholder 2!
PLUS! The One games challenge! Free Dune poster!

AUGUST 1992 - SOLD OUT!

SEPTEMBER 1992
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of Premiere, Tiny Skweeks and Match of the Day, Flashback preview and three PD games: War, Nebula and Croak!
WIPPED! Second Samurai, Flashback and more on Frontier: Elite 2!
REVIEWED! Premiere, MegaTraveller 2, Guy Spy, Fascination, Shadow of the Best 3 and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guides to Graham Taylor, Civilization and Fire & Ice (pt 2) and the on-going solution to Monkey Island 2!

OCTOBER 1992
ON THE DISKS! Three disks this month, containing playable demos of Assassin, KGB and Fireforce plus 2 PD games: Cybernetix and Sub Attack!
WIPPED! The Chaos Engine, Legends Of Valour and the final instalment of Frontier: Elite 2!
REVIEWED! Putty, The Humans, Aquatic Games, Lotus 3, Zool, Troddlers and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guides to Dune and Lure of the Temptress, the start of a complete solution to Eye of the Beholder 2 and the last part of the Monkey Island 2 solution!
PLUS! Those end-game sequences revealed! Westwood Studios interviewed!

NOVEMBER 1992
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of The Chaos Engine and Lionheart plus five PD games: Revolution, Bridge Ball, Flag Catcher, Biplanes and Tank Attack!
WIPPED! Street Fighter 2, Gunship 2000, Darkmere and Desert Strike!
REVIEWED! Wing Commander, Shadoworlds, Road Rash, Curse of Enchantia, Legend of Kyrandia, Assassin and many more!
TIPPED! Complete solution to Hook and the second part of the Eye of the Beholder solution!
PLUS! Sensible Software interviewed!

DECEMBER 1992
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of Sensible Soccer V1.1, No Second Prize, McDonalds Land and Creatures plus a preview of Street Fighter 2!
WIPPED! Superfrog, Star Trek and WWF 2!
REVIEWED! Legends of Valour, No Second Prize, McDonalds Land, BC Kid, Nigel Mansell, Lethal Weapon and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guides to Zool, Putty and Wizkid plus the last part of the Eye of the Beholder 2 solution!
PLUS! The A1200 revealed! Richard 'Mr Music' Joseph interviewed!

JANUARY 1993
ON THE DISKS! Psycho Game - a complete game specially written for The One by Bullfrog - along with playable demos of Gunship 2000 and Dalek Attack plus a preview of Archer Maclean's Pool!
WIPPED! Microcosm and Dracula on CD, Dune 2 and Superhero!
REVIEWED! Indy IV graphic adventure, Street Fighter 2, Cool World, KGB, Waxworks and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guides to Assassin and Wing Commander, the start of a complete Legend of Kyrandia solution and a complete solution to Dizzy: Prince of the Yolkfolk!
PLUS! 1993 previewed! The One awards! Stunning Dave Gibbons cover!

FEBRUARY 1993
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of Darkseed, Universal Monsters and Superhero!
WIPPED! Space Hulk, Chuck Rock 2 and Ambermoon!
REVIEWED! The Chaos Engine, Dragon's Lair 3, WWF 2, Darkseed, Sleepwalker and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guides to Street Fighter 2, Sensisoccer V1.1, Sabre Team and Fireforce plus the on-going Kyrandia solution!
PLUS! Commodore's ex-boss Kelly Sumner interviewed!

MARCH 1993
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of Superfrog, Flashback, Prime Mover and Woody's World, plus a complete PD game: Oblivion!
WIPPED! Liberation: Captive 2, Woody's World, Ishar 2, Blastar and amny more!
REVIEWED! Body Blows, Lionheart, Flashback, Transarctica, Walker, Lemmings 2 and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guide to Legends of Valour, complete solutions to Indy IV adventure and Future Wars and the last part of the Kyrandia solution!
PLUS! Ten good reasons to buy an A1200 now! Dino Dini interviewed!

APRIL 1993
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of FA Premier League (collector's item!), Abandone Places 2 and Beavers, plus two PD games: Transplant and PacMan Deluxe!
WIPPED! Batman Returns, Cyberspace, James Pond 3, The Lost Vikings and many more!
REVIEWED! Superfrog, Arabian Nights, Chuck Rock 2, Abandoned Places 2, Desert Strike and many more!
TIPPED! Complete solutions to Darkseed, Dragon's Lair 3 and Indy III, plus the start of player's guides to KGB and Bill's Tomato Game!
PLUS! X-Wing on Amiga revealed (but it's actually an April Fool's joke).

MAY 1993 - SOLD OUT!

JUNE 1993
ON THE DISKS! Blaster!, a specially-written full game for The One, plus a playable demo of Nippon Safes and two complete PD games: Alien Bash and Tractor Beam!
WIPPED! Bubba 'n' Stix, Realms of Darkness, Innocent Until Caught, Maelstrom and many more!
REVIEWED! Goal!, Super Cauldron, Ancient Art of War in the Skies, Legend 2, The Lost Vikings and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guide to Lionheart and Chuck Rock 2 plus the completion of the solutions to KGB and Chaos Engine!
PLUS! We tell you how to get into the software business!

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JULY 1993 - SOLD OUT!

AUGUST 1993
ON THE DISKS! Trex Warrior, a full game from Thalion written specially for The One, plus a playable demo of Ishar 2 and Snakes and a complete PD game: Wibble World Giddy!
WIPPED! Total Carnage, TFX, Beneath the Steel Sky, Utopia 2, Brutal Sports Football and many more!
REVIEWED! Deep Core, Sim Life, Whale's Voyage, 1869, Battle Isle '93 and many more!
TIPPED! Player's guide to Dune 2, Gunship 2000 and Reach for the Skies, the Abandoned Places 2 complete solution continues while the World Of Legend solution starts!
PLUS! The CD32 is unveiled! Arnie's raw deal!

SEPTEMBER 1993
ON THE DISKS! Playable demos of Overdrive, Bubba 'n' Stix, F117a Stealth Fighter, Deep Core and Suburban Commando!
WIPPED! Last Action Hero, Micro Machines, Alfred Chicken, Theatre of Death, Seek & Destroy, Oscar and many more!
REVIEWED! Soccer Kid, Hired Guns, Diggers, Premier Manager 2, Yo! Joe!, Blob, The Patrician and many more!
TIPPED! Complete player's guide to Syndicate and War in the Gulf, a complete solution to Transarctica, the start of the Ishar 2 solution, the ongoing Abandoned PLaces 2 and Worlds of Legend sagas!
PLUS! More CD32 info!

OCTOBER 1993
ON THE DISKS!Playable demos of Space Hulk, Alfred Chicken and Burning Rubber!
WIPPED! Mortal Kombat, Dreamweb, Elfmania, Evolution, Wonder Dig, F1 and many more!
REVIEWED! Space Hulk, Jurassic Park, Overkill, Micro Machines, Alfred Chicken, Blastar, Disposable Hero, Burning Rubber and many more!
TIPPED! Complete players' guide to Diggers, Beastlord, Wibble World Giddy, The Patrician, Goal! and more of the Ishar 2 and Worlds of Legend solutions!
PLUS! It's ECTS time again.

NOVEMBER 1993
ON THE DISKS! 3 Disks again, featuring playable demos of Uridium 2, Hero Quest 2 and Seek and Destroy, along with two complete PD games - Zombie Apocalypse and Project Buzzbar.
WIPPED! Body Blows Galactic, King's Quest VI, Rally, Rise of the Robots, Seventh Sword of Mendor and many more!
REVIEWED! Brutal Sports Football, Cardiaxx, Donk, Frontier: Elite 2, Qwak and many more!
TIPPED! Hired Guns, Alfred Chicken (part one), Space Hulk (part one), Ishar 2 (part three) and many more!
PLUS! The programmers talk to us! DMA Talk to us! FInd out how we make The One!

DECEMBER 1993
ON THE DISKS!Playable demos Alien Breed 2, Brian the Lion and Bob's Bad Day!
WIPPED! Heimdall 2, Reunion, Theme Park and many more!
REVIEWED! Cyberpunks, F117A STealth Fighter, Cannon Fodder, Alien Breed 2, Body Blows Galactic, Liberation, Magic Boy, Perihelion, The Settlers and many, many more!
TIPPED! The end of the Ishar 2 solution! Body Blows Galactic, Alien Breed 2, Space Hulk (part 2), MASSIVE Frontier players' guide, the complete solution to The Secret of Monkey Island and many more!
PLUS! Find out how they make Games World Live! as we spend a day with them!

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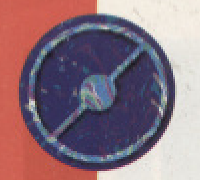
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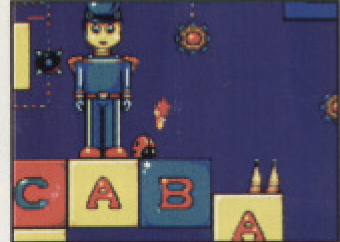
The results of our recent Reader Survey only served to confirm what we already knew: you love Recommended! Comments like, "More, please," and, "The best part of the magazine by far - forget all those crappy reviews, we want to read about the best games over the last year," came flooding in. Even the competition is a real winner: Ima Git from Grenoside awarded it a stunning billion percent - the highest praise any particular section could wish for. So here we are once more. Prepare to feast your eyes on these beauties as we reveal this months' Recommended games...

Alfred Chicken

86%

Publisher:	Mindscape
Issue Reviewed:	October 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99

Although not as good-looking as some of the recent flock of platform games, Alfred scores over many of its rivals by simply being incredibly playable. There are tons of secret rooms and bonuses to find and, generally speaking, you'd be hard pushed to find a better no-nonsense platform romp.



Alien Breed 2

91%

Publisher:	Team 17
Issue Reviewed:	December 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99

Team 17 return to familiar territory with this, the sequel to the game that first established the company as one of Britain's leading Amiga developers. It's more of the same Gauntlet-esque bug-hunting action basically, but bigger, busier and blastier. Some have complained it's too easy though...

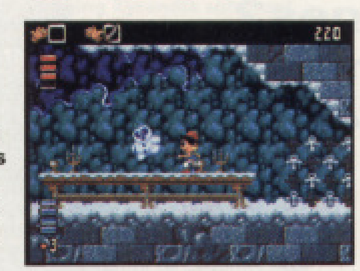


Arabian Nights

90%

Publisher:	Krisalis
Issue Reviewed:	April 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£25.99

Yes, Arabian Nights is yet another platform game, but don't yawn and turn over the page because this one is really something rather special. It's fast, looks good, sounds terrific and plays superbly, but on top of that it's got some excellent 'arcade adventure' aspects to add a touch of depth. Smart stuff all round.



Battle Isle '93

89%

Publisher:	Blue Byte
Issue Reviewed:	August 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£29.99

If you liked Battle Isle then you'll love this. It's basically more of the same but with an enhanced control interface ripped from Historyline. Once again you have to pit your armies of tanks, troops and spacefighters against the enemy hordes. Guaranteed fun for all.

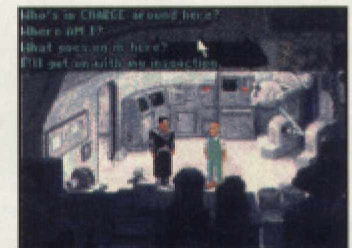


Beneath a Steel Sky

93%

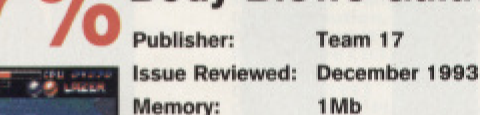
Publisher:	Virgin Interactive
Issue Reviewed:	November 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£29.99

Revolution's latest has been produced in collaboration with top comic artist Dave Gibbons, and if ever there was a match made in heaven then this is it. The result is a stunning graphic adventure which, while lacking in humour compared to, say, Monkey Island, more than compensates in every other department.



Body Blows Galactic

87%



Publisher:	Team 17
Issue Reviewed:	December 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99

Yet another sequel from Team 17 which does for street fightin' what Alien Breed 2 does for bug huntin'. Body Blows Galactic is the business, boasting much smoother animation - the characters no longer move like the puppets from Thunderbirds - faster action, animated backgrounds and enhanced sound effects.

Brutal Sports Football

88%

Publisher:	Millennium
Issue Reviewed:	November 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£25.99

It's been a long time since Speedball 2 set the pace in fantasy sports games, and while Brutal Sports Football doesn't quite make the Bitmap game obsolete it's a worthy companion piece. It's extremely violent, with spurts of blood flying everywhere and even the occasional decapitation! You have been warned...

Bubba 'n' Stix

91%

Publisher:	Core Design
Issue Reviewed:	January 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£25.99

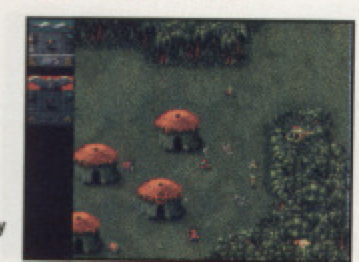
Another platform game from Core Design? Surely not! We shouldn't moan though, especially if there as well done as Bubba 'n' Stix. Yes, it's a bit short, but it's beautifully programmed, the graphics have a vividness not often seen on the Amiga and there's a brilliant vein of humour running through it all.

Cannon Fodder

93%

Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Issue Reviewed: December 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

War, say the Sensible boys, has never been so much fun, and we have to agree - Cannon Fodder is one of the most enjoyable games we've played in, ooh, yonks. It may look like a fairly simple run around and blast affair, but there's a surprising amount of strategy needed if you're to make it through to the end.



Chuck Rock 2

86%

Publisher: Core Design
Issue Reviewed: April 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £25.99

CR2 stars baby Chuck Jr in a perilous trek across loads of gorgeously-detailed and heavily-parallaxed scrolly levels in an attempt to rescue his dad, the famed Chuck Rock. Although familiar platform stuff, the huge, imaginatively-drawn baddies and tongue-in-cheek humour makes this a winner.



Combat Air Patrol

89%

Publisher: Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed: April 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

In the same month we reviewed Desert Strike along came the similarly Gulf War-inspired Combat Air Patrol. It's a flight sim with its eye firmly on playability rather than rigorous technical accuracy, so while it may not impress the sim hard-liners the rest of us will have a whale of a time. The 3D, by the way, is great.



Desert Strike

93%

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Issue Reviewed: April 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

Definitely EA's best Megadrive-to-Amiga conversion yet, DS has you flying a state-of-the-art attack chopper around hostile desert territory. Basically it's a thinking man's shoot-'em-up, with excellent graphics and sound as well as flawless playability. A classic, and actually better than its Megadrive inspiration.

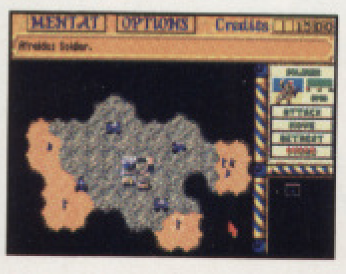


Dune 2

90%

Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Issue Reviewed: July 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £30.99

From Westwood, the people who brought you the highly-regarded Kyrandia, comes this, a very playable and beginner-friendly strategy game in the Sim City mould. Harvest spice, fight rival Houses, become ruler of Arrakis and have fun. This is good stuff for strategy buff and novice alike.



Frontier: Elite 2

96%

Publisher: GameTek
Issue Reviewed: November 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £34.99

We've waited a long, long time for this, but it's been worth every minute of it. Frontier is, quite simply, the game you bought your Amiga for. Admitted it's not the most 'beginner friendly' game ever, and it takes a while to get its hooks into you, but when it does it won't let go for years. A must buy.



Fury of the Furries

90%

Publisher: Mindscape
Issue Reviewed: January 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

A puzzle/platform game very similar to The Lost Vikings, Fury of the Furries offers 100 levels of mind-bending, reflex-testing action as you use your three cutesy Tinies in various permutations in an attempt to reach each stage's exit. It may not look like much but, believe us, it's as addictive as hell.



Genesia

88%

Publisher: Mindscape
Issue Reviewed: January 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

This is a huge 'society building' game very similar to the equally recommended The Settlers. Starting off with a tiny tribe of people, you must use their various skills to build a thriving and expanding civilisation. It's not as easy to get into as The Settlers, but offers greater rewards for those who perservere.

Goal!

91%

Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Issue Reviewed: June 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £25.99

The game that would be Kick Off 3 is finally here and it's a scorcher! While not as instantly accessible as some of its rivals there's a wealth of options you can toggle one and off to make life easier. In our book it's not quite the Sensi beater that some would have you believe it is but it's great none-the-less.



Gunship 2000

90%

Publisher: MicroProse
Issue Reviewed: July 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £34.99

Have we had to wait for this! Don't worry, though, it's been worth it. Once again the 'Prose people have come up trumps with what is undoubtedly THE helicopter sim on the Amiga. Super-fast contoured landscapes, wingmen, oodles of firepower and long-term challenge make this any flyboy's 'must buy'.

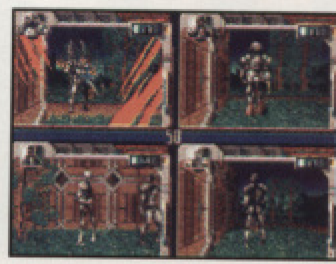


Hired Guns

91%

Publisher: Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed: September 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

You may not think you like RPGs but if so you haven't played this - it truly is an RPG for everyone. Using a Dungeon Master-style control system you must guide four futuristic mercenaries around complexes blasting all and sundry and solving puzzles. It's violent in the extreme - but great fun!

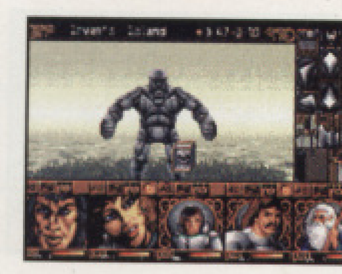


Ishar 2

86%

Publisher: Silmarils
Issue Reviewed: July 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

Yet more adventures in Arborea! The game engine has been tweaked and cleaned up here and there, but technically it's not that much of a leap over what the first Ishar offered. All the same it's good, long-lasting entertainment, even if it is too easy to waste a lot of time wandering around lost.



Jurassic Park

89%

Publisher: Ocean
Issue Reviewed: October 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £26.99

An Ocean film conversion with not a platform in sight? Shurely shome mishtake? Nope - taking a pinch of The Chaos Engine and mixing it with a couple of spoonfuls of Legends Of Valour, JP turns out to be a game worthy of the licence, with arcade action a-plenty. Deserves to be a smash. Welcome back Ocean!

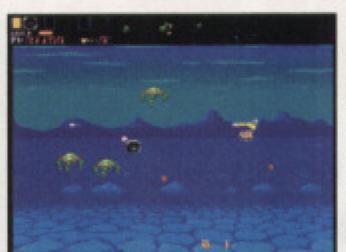


Overkill

89%

Publisher: Mindscape
Issue Reviewed: October 1993
Memory: 2Mb (A1200 only)
Price: £25.99

An A1200-only game which actually makes use of all those 32 bits, Overkill is the most intense blaster you're likely to come across. It's basically Defender with a few gameplay tweaks, so for shoot-'em-up purists it's the equivalent of heaven. May be a bit short for some, though.



Liberation: Captive 2

94%

Publisher: Mindscape
Issue Reviewed: December 1993
Memory: 2Mb (CD32 only)
Price: £34.99

Yes! Here it is - the first CD32 game to enter the select Recommended Hall Of Fame. And deservedly so - Liberation is a brilliant, atmospheric RPG with one of the sexiest intros you're ever likely to see that really shows off Commodore's baby's capabilities to the full. Will probably help CD32 sales no end.



Premier Manager 2

90%

Publisher: Gremlin
Issue Reviewed: September 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £25.99

It's not very day you find us raving about a footy management sim, so when we do you can bet it must be pretty special - as Premier Manager 2 is! It's full of features and options, yet still marvelously easy to get into and play. If you fancy taking your team to the top of the league, here's where to come.

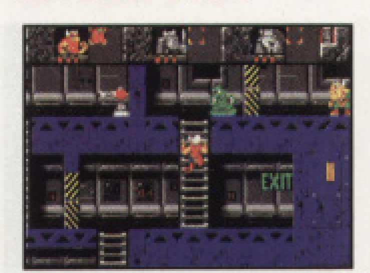


The Lost Vikings

90%

Publisher: Interplay
Issue Reviewed: June 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £25.99

The Lost Vikings is an arcade adventure with a premise very similar to Gobliiins', i.e. you have three characters under your control, each of whom have different abilities, and you have to use them in the right order to solve puzzles. Fortunately it's far better than that game. Indeed, it's one of the best this year!

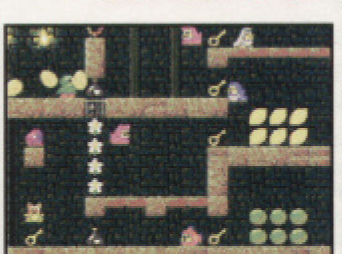


Qwak

88%

Publisher: Team 17
Issue Reviewed: November 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £12.99

Qwak may be 'just' a budget title but it's completely brilliant which is why it's found a home here amongst the Recommendeds. It's a one- or two-player Bubble Bobble-style game, with the aim being simply to amass points on your platform-filled odyssey through the kingdom of cuteness. Simply marvellous.

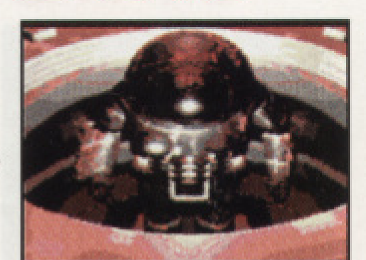


Microcosm

86%

Publisher: Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed: January 1993
Memory: 2Mb (CD32 only)
Price: £TBA

Okay, so basically it's little more than a basic 3D shoot-'em-up in the Space Harrier mould, but as far as 3D shoot-'em-ups go it's just about the best-looking one you could possibly imagine. And it plays pretty well too, although the joypad don't half make your thumb sore. All it really lacks is variety. Ah well.

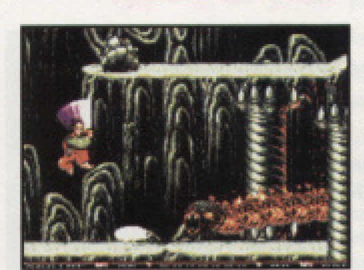


Second Samurai

87%

Publisher: Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed: December 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £29.99

Although perhaps looking a little too similar to the original First Samurai, this sequel is a far better game. Although the hero doesn't move quite a fluidly as he used to he's still pretty nifty with his sword, and the tighter level design and less oblique puzzles make for a much more entertaining experience all round.



Micro Machines

89%

Publisher: Codemasters
Issue Reviewed: October 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £25.99

No-one guessed that the Codies would beat Team 17 in the top-down racer Grand Prix but by golly they have! Although Micro Machines isn't quite as groovy in one-player mode as Overdrive, it compensates for this by having the best two-player action you're every likely to see. It's got to be played to be believed.



The Settlers

90%

Publisher: Blue Byte
Issue Reviewed: December 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £34.99

Imagine Little Computer People cross-bred with Populous and you'll have a good idea what Settlers looks and plays like. It's your typical God game (build an empire, keep your folks happy and quash any rivals) spruced up with some super-cute animations on your subjects. Great stuff and very user-friendly

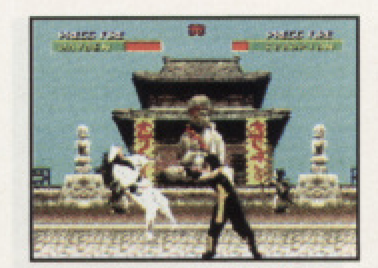


Mortal Kombat

89%

Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Issue Reviewed: January 1993
Memory: 1Mb
Price: £34.99

Top marks to Probe Software for coming up with arguably the most accurate coin-op conversion ever. Everything from the arcade original is here - the graphics, the sound and, most importantly, the gameplay ('the gore' surely? -Ed). Could well rank as the best beat-'em-up on the Amiga...



Skidmarks

88%

Publisher: Acid Software
Issue Reviewed: January 1993
Memory: 512K
Price: £25.99

If you have fond memories of Super Off-Road then prepare to have them rekindled with this, a superb racer viewed from a similar perspective. Although a bit of a duffer when played alone - the computer cars are crap to say the least - it's brilliant in two-player mode (as per usual with these kinds of games).





Soccer Kid

93%

Publisher:	Krisalis
Issue Reviewed:	September 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99



Well, well, well. Just four months after we screamed that Superfrog was the best Amiga platform game ever, along comes Soccer Kid and we have to change our tune. It's nothing short of brilliant - gorgeous to look at, sweet on the ears, and boasting some of the slickest gameplay we've seen in a long time. Buy it!

Uridium 2

91%

Publisher:	Renegade
Issue Reviewed:	November 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99

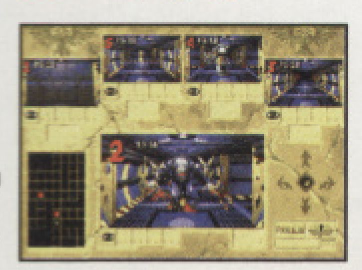


The C64 classic comes to the Amiga in style, souped-up beyond belief with 32-colour graphics, 50-frames-per-second action, multi-way scrolling, power-ups and all the other good things you've come to expect from a 90's shoot-'em-up. It's very tough, but for die-hard blasting fans it's a dream come true.

Space Hulk

91%

Publisher:	Electronic Arts
Issue Reviewed:	October 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£31.99

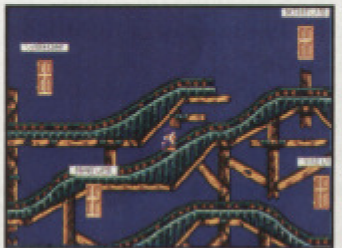


At last - a conversion of a boardgame that doesn't simply recreate the board in DPaint! Instead, Space Hulk takes all the best bits from the original game and bungs in a whole load of extra computer effects to create one of the most atmospheric strategic-blasters we've seen in ages. Completely ace.

Wiz 'n' Liz

86%

Publisher:	Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed:	November 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99



Originally a Mega Drive game, this cutesy race-'n'-collect-'em-up is perhaps a little too simplistic to be worth buying if you're going to be playing it alone - you're likely to get bored of it long before the end ever comes into sight - but it's great value if you've got a friend who can join in the fun.

Stardust

91%

Publisher:	Bloodhouse
Issue Reviewed:	December 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£16.99

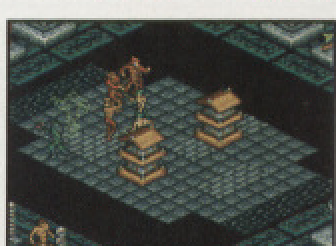


An unbelievable bargain at the price, Stardust is the ultimate Asteroids clone. The graphics have to be seen to be believed and it plays as well - maybe even better - than it looks. Along with the stunning 3D sub-game breaking up the rock bustin' between levels, this is a feast you just have to treat yourself to.

Worlds of Legend

92%

Publisher:	Mindscape
Issue Reviewed:	June 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£25.99

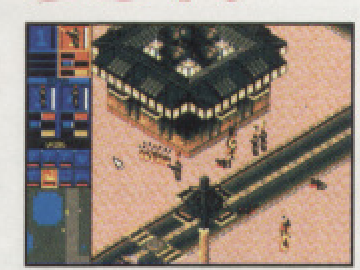


If you missed last year's Legend then you should make up for it right now and get this. It's a superb RPG which uses a near-identical control system. It's got plenty of action and tons of atmosphere. If you're the sort of person who cringes in horror at the thought of RPGs then this will convert you. See also Hired Guns.

Syndicate

88%

Publisher:	Electronic Arts
Issue Reviewed:	July 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99



Cross Bladerunner with a Sam Peckinpah movie and what do you get? Syndicate. From Bullfrog, this isn't perhaps quite in the same league as Populous 2 or Powermonger but it's damn fine all the same, especially if you like your computer game violence gory and realistic. Dead smart.

Zool 2

90%

Publisher:	Gremlin
Issue Reviewed:	January 1993
Memory:	1Mb
Price:	£26.99



Yet another sequel wangles its way into these Recommended pages. Despite being more of the same, this is far superior to the original - Zool now has much more character, is much better animated and is a lot more enjoyable and less frustrating to control. If you want you can even play as Zooz, Zool's girlfriend!

COMPETITION

Yes! It's the quiz of the month! If you fancy your chances of winning one of ten fab-tastic software prizes then you've come to the right place. Just answer the following questions...

(1) What is the Capital of England?
(2) What is the Capital of Scotland?
(3) What is the Capital of Wales?

Answers on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope by March 28th to the following address: Recommended Compo 5, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The first ten entries drawn from the hat after the closing date win!

Next Month

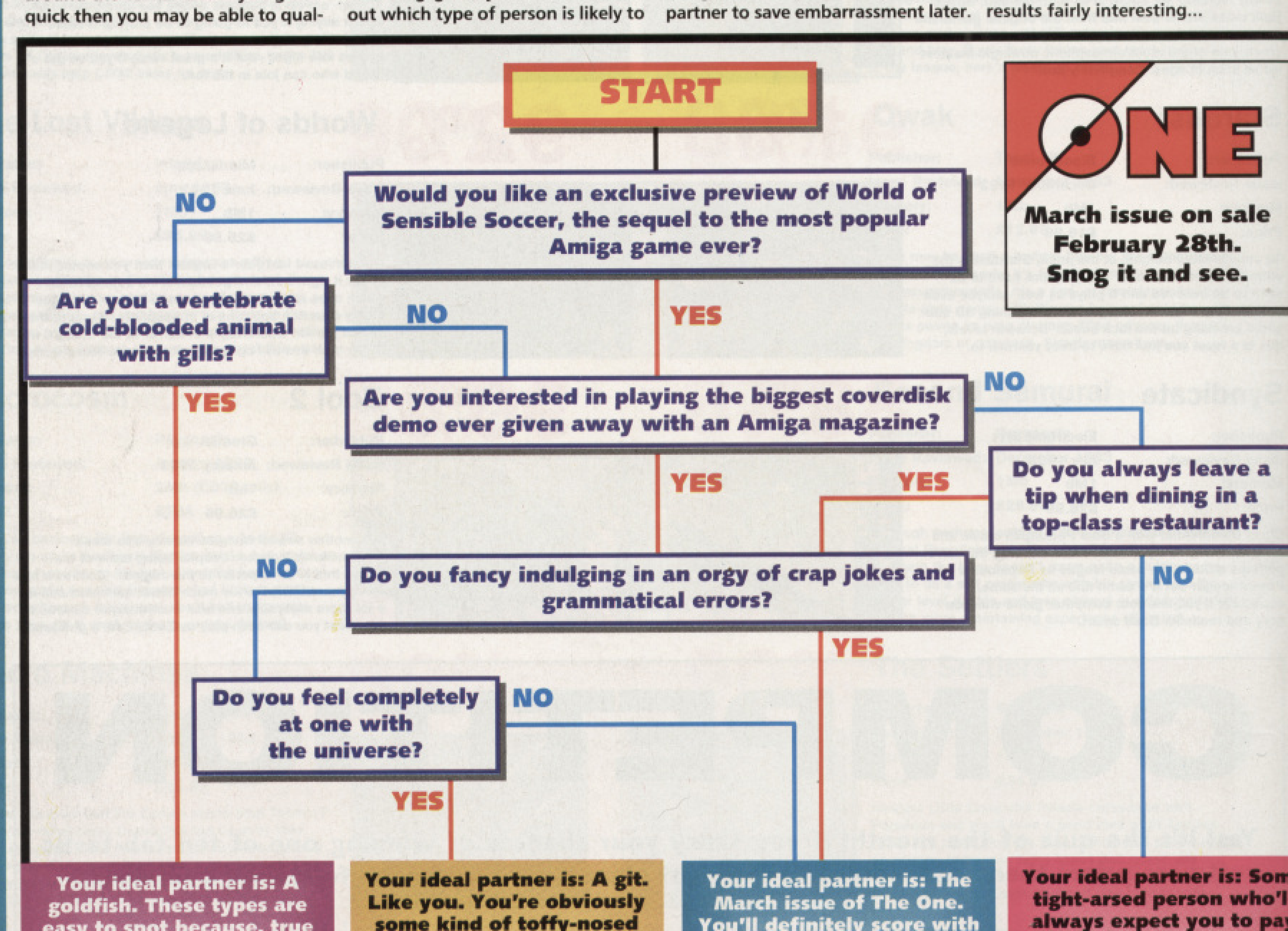
With Simon Byron

WILL YOU SCORE IN 94?

We're almost a month into the New Year and with Christmas safely behind us we can turn our thoughts to getting off with members of the opposite sex. If you think about it, this is the best time to attempt this kind of thing - Valentine's Day is just around the corner and if you get in quick then you may be able to qualify for a present or two off your new loved-one. CDs, computer games and brew your own lager kits can all be obtained with a few subtly-placed hints here and there. There is, as they say, a right killing to be made.

But before you think about receiving gifts, you need to work out which type of person is likely to respond to your advances. This can be a particularly troublesome task at the best of times. What seems like an incredibly great gag to boys can often fail to impress girls (and vice-versa, of course), especially if the two of you don't share interests.

What you need is a way of discovering how to pinpoint your ideal partner to save embarrassment later. A helpful guide to steer you through your love life. And after month's of research from our kissing correspondent, I'm pleased to announce the arrival of the ultimate 'Get Off Guide'. Just follow the guide around, answering the questions honestly and your kindred spirit will be revealed. I think you'll find the results fairly interesting...



ONE

March issue on sale February 28th. Snog it and see.



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